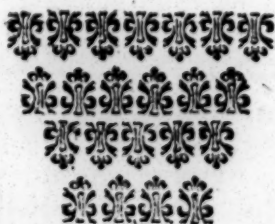


THE
LADIES
CALLING.
IN TWO PARTS.

By the Author of the WHOLE DUTY
OF MAN, &c.

The Sixth Impression.

*Favor is deceitful, and Beauty is vain: but
a Woman that feareth the Lord she shall
be praised, Prov. 31. 30.*



Printed at Amsterdam, 1682.





THE PREFACE.

THO the smalness of this Tract will scarce justify the solemnity of a Preface; yet remembering 'tis desig'd for those who are accustomed to Ceremonious Addresses, I think it not best to approach them too abruptly. And indeed besides the Civility, there seems some use of it in order to my design. To advise, or reprove, is so ungrateful an Office, that he that undertakes it, had need use all previous arts to vindicate the sincerity of his purpose, and to convince the person admonished, that 't is neither spleen nor prejudice, but the most real exuberant kindness which prompts him to inflict those wounds of a friend Prov. 27. 6. that he is never less an enemy, then when he thus tells them the truth, Gal. 4. 16. Therefore, tho they may in the ensuing leaves meet with some things which may have a shew of severity, yet let me assure my Reader, they have indeed a design of the greatest service, by correcting the extravagance of some, to rescue the whole Sex. as from the contagion of the example, so from the community of the blame. For such is either the inadvertence, or malice of a great part of mankind, that (against all Rules of Discourse) they deduce Generals from Particulars, make every woman so far an Eve, that her depravation shall forfeit her whole kind; and because there are foolish and scandalous women will scarce allow there are any other.

The Preface.

The truth is, the Error seems in many men to be affected; they propose to themselves unworthy ends on women, and make all their observations wholly in order to those. He that is upon a base pursuit, takes particular notice of all that he thinks for his turn; the rest fall not within his Sphere: and 't is too probable he is so abundantly supplied for that absolute consideration, that he never descends to the comparative. Nay, perhaps there may be a yet deeper original of the scandal: the world is much governed by estimation; and as applause encourages and exalts, so universal content debases and dejects the Spirit. If it can once pass into a Maxim, that women are such silly or vicious creatures, it may put fair for the making them so indeed. Themselves may imbibe the common opinion, charge all their personal faults on their Sex, think that they do but their kind when indeed they must contradict it, and no more aspire to any thing worthy, than a man can pretend to the excellencies of an Angel. And indeed this seems to be the practical inference of some women, who could hardly have descended to such dishonors, had they not before bin as vile in their own eyes, as they have afterwards rendered themselves in others.

It may therefore upon this account be a necessary Charity to the Sex, to acquaint them with their own value, animate them to some higher thoughts of themselves; not to yield their suffrage to those injurious estimates the World hath made of them, an from a supposed incapacity of nobler things to neglect the pursuit of them; from which God and Nature have no more percluded the Feminine, than the Masculine part of mankind.

In reference to secular Consideration, their advantages are most important; Women have a very powerful Influence upon all sorts of Transactions in the World: the engaging of the Dalilah, and plowing with the Heifer, Judg. 14. & 16. being ever the surest way to undermine the Counsels, and master the force of the stoutest Samson. And accordingly, Histories of all kinds assure us, that Gynceum has still had a Rival suffrage with the Senate. I might urge the more regular Powers which appertain unto that Sex; that all mankind is the Pupil and Disciple of Female Institution: the Daughters till they write women, and the Sons till the first seven years be past; the time when the mind is most ductile, and prepar'd to receive impression, being wholly in

The Preface:

in the Care and Conduct of the Mother : And whereas 'tis observ'd by Aristotle in his Politics , (and is a proof of his being as wise , as he was a learned man) that the Estate of Republics entirely hangs on private families , the little Monarchies both composing and giving law unto the great ; 'tis evident that the disposal of Families and all Domestic concerns therein lies chiefly in the Wife ; whence the same Aristotle declares that the Spartans notwithstanding their ready address to Empire by their great frugality , industry , and military virtue , could have but half a happiness , as failing on the part of their Wives . But waving these reflexions , I shall fix only on the personal accomplishments of the Sex , and peculiarly that which is the most principal endowment of the rational nature , I mean their understanding . Where first it will be a little hard to pronounce , that they are naturally inferior to men ; when 'tis considered how much of extrinsic weight is put in the ballance to turn it on the mens side . Men have their parts cultivated and improved by Education , refined and subtilized by Learning and Arts , are like an inclosed piece of a Common , which by industry and husbandry becomes a different thing from the rest , tho the natural turf own'd no such inequality . And truly had women the same advantage , I dare not say but they would make as good returns of it ; some of those few that have bin tryed , have bin eminent in several parts of Learning . To omit the modern instances , Theano after the death of Pythagoras kept up his School ; Socrates confesses himself to have bin instructed not only in Rhetoric by Aspasia , but even in the highest Points of Philosophy by Diotime : the Roman Story enforms us of the deep wisdom of Tanaquil , Cornelia , Livia , so pass by others . And were we sure they would have ballast to their sails ; have humility enough to poize them against the vanity of Learning , I see not why they might not more frequently be intrusted with it ; for if they could be secured against this weed , doubtless the soil is rich enough to bear a good crop . But not to oppose a received opinion , let it be admitted , that in respect of their intellects they are below men ; yet sure in the sublimest part of humanity , they are their equals : they have souls of as divine an Original , as endless a Duration , and as capable of infinit Beatitude . That spiritual Essence , that ray of Divinity owns no distinction of Sexes ; so that in this sense also that Aphorism of the

The Preface.

Apostle holds good there is neither Male nor Female, but all are one. Gal. 3. 28. And sure this is the one transcendent Excellency of Human Nature. For alas, what value can comparatively be set upon all other Qualifications, which will finally leave us but like the Beasts that perish, And as this is the highest pitch of their worth, so it is the safest subject of their Contemplations: other Knowledge, as the Apostle speaks, 1. Cor. 8. 1. may puff up, this only will edify.

As therefore when we would pride ourselves we use not to boast our manner, but our best qualities: so let me solicit Ladies to be so just to themselves, as not to take their own measures by any thing below this. Why should they take so low a level of Greatness, as to value themselves upon a title which is but a bigger blast of air, when they may derive their descent from above the Stars, claim cognation with Divinity? Why should they dote on the fictitious image, of a perhaps more fictitious beauty, which their glass presents them, when they need but look inward to see an infinitely fairer Idea, an emanation of the eternal Brightness? Indeed did they make a just estimate of themselves in this respect, it would overthrow the vanity of those inferior things wherein they now have such complacency, nor would they suffer their nobler parts to be affronted by the unequal competition of their meaner.

But there is also another consequent which would flow from that esteem: they would solicitously preserve what they so highly prize, it being natural for us to proportion our care to our value. They would be jealously vigilant against every thing, that might eclipse the radiancy or contaminate the purity of their souls. 'Twas the advice of a Heathen moralist, Revere thy self; and 'twas very wholesome counsel: for next our due veneration to God, a reverence to our selves is the most severe controller of all exorbitancies. How can a soul that remembers its celestial extraction, wallow itself in the mire, stoop to any sordid degenerate practices? 'Tis said of Themistocles, that seeing once a rich booty about the dead corpses of his enemies, he toucht it not, but pointing to another, said, Take thou that, for thou art not Themistocles. If then a little military fame could so elevate his thoughts, 'tis a shame that any who carry an immortal spirit about them, should not be raised above all the contemptible baits of this subjunary World. Why should they not with the like disdain turn

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The Preface.

over all sensual inordinacies to meer Animals, and creatures that have no higher principle than that of Sense, whilst themselves soar up to those more sublimated pleasures, which are at God's Right Hand for evermore, Psal. 16. 12.

We may therefore conclude, that what ever vicious impotence Women are under, it is acquired, not natural; nor derived from any illiberality of God's, but from the managery of his bounty. He has placed within them a pillar of Cloud and Fire, sufficient to shelter and conduct them through all the storms, all the intricacies that can occur in their journey to Canaan; if they will forget that more intrinsic part of their being, live as if they were all body, reject the Manna, and rave after the Quails; that destruction which will thereby be induced they must own to spring from themselves. Let them not charge God foolishly, or think that by making them women, he necessitated them to be proud, or wanton, vain, or peevish; since 'tis manifest he made them to better purposes, was not partial to the other Sex, but that having, as the Prophet speaks abundance of spirit, Mal. 2. he equally dispenc'd it, and gave the feeblest woman as large and capacious a soul as that of the Greatest Hero.

Nay give me leave to say farther, that as to an Eternal well-being, he seems to have placed them in more advantageous circumstances than he has done men. He has implanted in them some native propensions, which (as I shall hereafter have occasion to observe) do much facilitate the operations of Grace upon them. Besides, there are many temptations to which men are exposed that are out of their road. How hard it is for a man to converse in the world; but he shall be importun'd to debauchery and excess, must forfeit his sobriety to maintain the reputation of a sociable Person? Again, how liable are they by a promiscuous conversation among variety of humors, to meet with affronts, which the Maxims of Honour will tell them, must (in spite of all Christ's interdicts) be reveng'd? And this engages them in Quarrels, sometimes in Murders. Now none of these are incident to women: they must in these and some other instances attack temptation, violently ravish guilt, and abandon their Sex, the whole Economy of their state, ere they can divest themselves of their innocency. So that God seems in many particulars to have closelier fenced them in, and not left them to those wilder excursions, for which the customary

The Preface.

Liberties of the other Sex afford a more open way. In short, they have so many advantages towards Virtue, that the Philosophers made it one of his solemn acknowledgments to God, that he had made him a man; and not a woman; yet I think Christian women have now reason enough to invert that form, and to thank God that he made them women, and not men.

But we know advantages which are only in speculation, are lookt on with some diffidence, till there have been some practical experiment made of them; I shall therefore evidence the problem by demonstration, and instance; desiring my Readers to measure the possibilities of their arriving to eminent degrees of Virtue and Piety, by what others have attained to. I shall not fetch examples of Morality from *Heathen Woman*, because I am now upon a higher strain; (yet many such might be brought to the reproach of many Women, who pretending to more, fall infinitely short of that :) 'tis *Christian Virtue* that I am now recommending, and which has bin eminently exemplified in many of their Sex. How many Women do we read of in the Gospel, who in all the duties of assiduous attendance on Christ, liberalities of love and respect, nay even in zeal and courage, surpassed even the Apostles themselves? We find his Cross surrounded, his Passion celebrated by the avowed tears and lamentations of devout Women, when the most sanguine of his Disciples had denied, yea forswore, and all had forsaken him. Nay, even Death it self could not extinguish their love; we find the devout Maries designing a laborious, chargeable, and perhaps hazardous respect to his Corps. And accordingly 'tis a memorable attestation Christ gives to their Piety, by making them the first Witnesses of his Resurrection, the prime Evangelists to Proclaim those glad Tidings; and as a Learned man speaks, Apostles to the Apostles. Nor is the devotion of that Sex to be found only in the sacred Records; the Primitive times have left us many Memorials of the like, and the Martyrologies are full of Female sufferers of all Ages and conditions, who by the fervor of their Zeal had overcome the timorousness of their Nature and wearied the cruelty of their Persecutors. And as Women help to augment the number of Martyrs so did they of Confessors also, in a stout owning, and diligent practice of Christianity. Queens and Empresses knew then no Title so Glorious as that of a nursing Mother to the Church, have often exchanged their Palaces for

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The Preface.

little Cells and Oratories, and valued not their own Diadems in comparison with their Saviour's Crown of Thorns, And tho by a perpetual declination from that pristine Zeal the instances have in every Age grown less numerous, yet none has wanted some very illustrious Examples. Nay even in our dregs of time, in this common decay of all good, there are I doubt not, many who (according to their opportunities) transcribe the former Copies, live like People that know they must live hereafter, and present us yet with some Specimen of ancient Virtue. Nay, to speak an impartial Truth, 'tis not to be denied, but the reputation of Religion is more kept up by women then men, many of the one countenancing it by their Practicall, whereas more of the other do not only neglect, but decry it. And now since Women are compassed, about with so great a cloud of Witnesses, who by doing the thing, give the surest evidence that 'tis not unfeasible, Why should any plead an impossibility?

In matters of Vanity and Pomp they that are not so easily disheartened, no pattern of that kind can be set which will not be industriously imitated; nay in the greatest inequality of materials for it. Why then should their emulation leave them where only it could do them good? How comes it, that of those who have equal Principles of a spiritual Being, some live according to the dignity of it; and others who see them do so, do yet live as if they assented to that Philosophers Paradox, who said, Women had no souls; or at least were of the Pythagorian Sect, and lookt upon themselves only as the Fails and Prisons of former offending Spirits, which they resolved to fit for a yet viler transmigration; give them the appetites of Beasts before they assume the Bodies? This is indeed an unlucky Humaniety, that those who in all other instances are apt to overween should here sink so much below themselves. And I hope 'twill not appear an uncivil address, to perswade them to juster estimate of their own worth, and if what has bin said to that end may have any effect, I shall not desire a better Preparative to the ensuing Tract; since she that duly considers her own capacity of Eternal Bliss, and withal, the possibility of an Endless Miserie, according as she performs or neglects the several Parts of Dutie, will sure need no other incentive to the diligent Pursuit of it.





THE LADIES CALLING.

PART I. SECT. I.

Of Modesty.

1. **I**T is now many years since an Address was made to the Gentry of this Nation, to perswade them to that Vertue, which would be both their Pleasure and Reward. I cannot. I confess, boast any such Effect of that, as should much inspirit the hopes of a new Attempt; yet since we see in our proper secular Concerns, Defeats do many times animate no less than Success, I know not why in this more charitable Design I should sit down discouraged. Men usually raise not a siege upon the first repulse; but reinforce their Batteries, observe more curiously which are the most assailable accessible parts, and accordingly dispose their assault: It will then be no unreasonable imitation in the present case, if, after a successful Attempt upon the more impregnable Masculine part of the Gentry, I now essay the Feminine, whose native Softness and Gentleness may render them less apt for that resistance of good Counsel, wherein too many Men place their Gallantry.

2. I presume those to whom that little Tract was at first design'd, will be so willing to relinquish their Title, that I might without imputation of robbery, exchange my Patrons, and by a new Dedication supersede the labour of

a new Book. And indeed, since what was there said was founded more on the distinction of Qualities than of Sex; there would not need many razures to render it as proper for the one as the other; and I shall take so much advantage of it, as to assure the female Gentry, that they may there find much of the Duty incumbent on them, in respect of that Rank and Condition they hold in the World: and therefore, tho I shall sometimes make some reflections on it; yet, as to the main, I shall think it the easiest course, as well for them as my self, to direct them thither.

3. But it may seem to have too much of the Pedant, to entertain new Scholers only with the cast or nauseated learning of the old, and when I remember I write to Ladies, who use to think the newness of any thing a considerable Addition to its value; I conceive my self oblig'd as well in civility to their humor, as charity to their needs, to give them something which they may own as their peculiar. And to render it the more unalienable, I shall fix it to their Sex; and make it the subject of my present inquisition, what in respect of that, are the proper and distinct Obligations, under which, by the assignment of God and Nature, they are placed.

4. That the Obligation to Moral & Christian Vertues is in it self universal, and not confin'd to any Sex or Person, is not to be denied: yet, as in human Constitutions there are often Precepts, which (tho not exclusive of any, do yet) more peculiarly and eminently level at some particular rank or order of Men; so in the laws of God and Nature, there appears the like distinction. That all-wise Creator, who hath put peculiar proprieties and inclinations into his Creatures, hath accordingly design'd their actuating and improving them: and altho in mankind, which differs not in species but in gender, the variety may seem less; yet there is still enough to found some diversity, either in the kind or degree of duty. This sure is shadowed to us in that particular caution given to the Jews, not to confound the habit of the Several Sexes, *Deut. 22* 5. and yet more clearly evinced in the Precept which the Apostles address to women, *1 Tim. 2* and *1 Pet. 3*. Nay, this is so granted a truth, that all Ages and Nations have made

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the distinction between masculine and feminine Vertues, nature having not only given a distinction as to the beauties of their outward form, but also in their very mold and constitution implanted peculiar aptnesses and proprieties of mind, which accordingly vary the measure of decency; that being comely for the one Sex, which often is not (at least in the same degree) for the other. It will therefore be no absurd attempt to decipher those excellencies, which are the genuine and proper ornaments of Women: which though in some instances they may perhaps prove co-incident with those of Men; yet even those which are equally inclusive of both, by the divine command may have some additional weight on the female side, in respect of decency, fame, or some other (not despicable) consideration.

5. For the better directing our present inquisition, it will be most regular, first to inquire what those Vertues are which are universally necessary to Women in all Ages and circumstances of their lives: such which, like the first matter, are prerequir'd for all forms; which, like a firm and solid Basis, must support all various events, all changes of their condition or relations. And secondly, we shall consider them in those changes, track them through the several stages and periods of life, through those several states which create the most considerable mutations to them; and in each of those consider, what are the new and proportionate accessions of duty.

6. As in the outward accommodations of life the things of most daily and indispensable use deserve the greatest value; so in moral or divine Endowments, the benefit of possessing is best measured by the misery of wanting them. This first rank therefore of female Vertues which we are to treat of, will have that to recommend them; they being so strictly necessary, that their absence is not only a privative ill, but also exposes to a deluge of all positive mischiefs consequent to that privation.

7. This will be found true in all the severals we are to pass through, but in none more eminently than in that we shall chuse to begin with the Vertue of Modesty; which may be considered in a double notion, the one as it is opposed to boldness and indecency, the other to lightness
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and wantonness. In the first acception, Zeno has not defin'd it, to be *the Science of decent motion*, it being that which guides regulates the whole behavior, checks and controls all rude exorbitancies, and is the great civilizer of conversations. It is indeed a vertu of a general influence does not only ballast the mind with sober and humble thoughts of ones self, but also steers every part of the outward frame. It appears in the face in calm and meeke looks, where it so impresses it self, that it seems thence to have acquir'd the name of shamefacedness. Certainly (whatever the modern opinion is) there is nothing gives a greater luster to a feminine beauty: so that St. Paul seems not ill to have consulted their concerns in that point, when he substitutes that as a suppletory ornament to *the decking of Gold and Pearl and costly Array*, 1 Tim. 2. But I fear this now will be thought too antiquated a dress, and an Apostle be esteemed no competent Judg in this Science; which is now become so solemn a thing, that certainly no Academy in the World can vie numbers with the Students of this Mytery. Yet when they have strein'd their art to the highest pitch; an innocent modesty, and native simplicity of Look, shall eclipse their glaring splendor, and triumph over their artificial handsonness: on the other side, let a Woman be decked with all the embellishment of Art, nay and care of Nature too, yet if boldness be to be read in her face, it blots all the lines of beauty, is like a cloud over the Sun, intercepts the view of all that was otherwise amiable, and renders its blackness the more observable, by being placed near somewhat that was apt to attract the eyes.

8. But Modesty confines not its self to the face, she is there only in shadow and effigie; but is in life and motion in the words, whence she banishes all indecency and rudeness, all insolent vauntings and supercilious disdain, and what ever else may render a person troublesom, or ridiculous to the company. Nor does she only refine the language. but she tunes it too, modulates the tone and accent, admits no unhandsome earnestness or loudness of Discourse, the latter whereof was thought so undecent in Carneades (tho in his public Lectures) that the Gymnasiarch

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reproved him for it : and sure, if 't were not allowable in a Philosopher in his School, 't will less become a woman in ordinary converse; and if we consult *Prov.* 7. 11. and 9. we shall find loudness and clamor in women coupled with such other epithets, as will surely not much recommend it. A womans tongue should indeed be like the imaginary Music of the spheres, sweet and charming, but not to be heard at distance.

9. And as Modesty perscribes the manner, so it does also the measure of speaking; restrains all excessive talkativeness, a fault incident to none but the bold, the monopolizing of discourse being one of the greatest assumings imaginable, and so rude an imposing upon the company, that there can scarce be a greater indecency in conversation. This is ingeniously express'd by our divine Poët *Herbert*,

A civil guest,

Will no more talk all, then eat all the Feast.

He that engrosses the talk, enforces silence upon the rest, and so is presumed to look on them only as his auditors and Pupils, whilst he magisteriously dictates to them: which gave occasion to *Socrates* to say, *It is arrogance to speak all, and to be willing to hear nothing.* It is indeed universally an insolent unbecoming thing, but most peculiarly so in a woman.

10. The ancient Romans thought it so much so, that they allowed not that sex to speak publicly, tho it were in their own necessary defence; insomuch that when *Amelia* stood forth to plead her own cause in the Senate, they lookt on it as so prodigious a thing; that they sent to consult the Oracle what it portended to the State: and tho these first severities were soon lost in the successes of that Empire *Valerius Maximus* could find but two more, whose either necessity or impudence, perswaded them to repeat this unhandsom attempt.

11. And this great indecency of Loquacity in Women, I am willing to hope is the reason why that Sex is so generally charged with it; not that they are all guilty.
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but that when they are, it appears so unhandfom, as makes it the more eminent and remarkable. Whether it were from that ungracefulness of the thing, or from the propension Women have to it, I shall not determin; but we find the Apostle very earnest in his cautions against it; 1 Cor. 14. 35. he expressly enjoins Women to *keep silence in the Church*, where he affirms it a shame for them to speak: and tho this seems only restrain'd to the Ecclesiastical Assemblies, yet even so it reaches home to the gifted Women of our age, who take upon them to be Teachers; whereas he allowed them not to speak in the Church, no not in order to learning, tho a more modest design then that of teaching. But besides this, he has a more indefinit prescription of silence to Women; 1 Tim. 2. 11. *Let Women learn in silence*: and again v. 12. *to be in silence*. The Apostle seems to ground the Phrase, not only on the inferiority of the woman in regard of the creation and first sin, v. 13. 14. but also on the presumption that they needed instruction; towards which, silence has alwaies bin reckoned an indispensable qualification, the introductory precept in all Schools, as that wherein all attention is founded. If some women of our age think they have outgone that novice state the Apostle supposes, and want no teaching; I must crave leave to believe, they want that very first Principle which should set them to learn, viz. the knowledge of their own ignorance: a science which so grows with study and consideration, that Socrates after a long life spent in pursuit of Wisdom, gave this as the sum of his learning, *This only I know, that I know nothing*. This proficiency seems much wanting to our female Talker, who, in this, seem to confute the common maxim, and give what they have not, by making their ignorance visib'e to others, tho it be undiscernable to themselves: and to such we may not unfitly apply the Sarcaism of Zeno to a talkative Youth; *their ears are fallen into their tongue*.

12. But besides this assuming sort of talkativeness, there is another usually charged upon the Sex, a meer chatting, prattling humor, which maintains in self at the cost of their neighbors, and can never want supplies as long as there is any body within the reach of their observation.

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This I would fain hope, is most the vice of the vulgar sort of Women; the education of the Nobler setting them above those meane entertainments. Yet when 'tis remembred that *St. Paul*, *1 Tim.* 5. 13. makes Tatling the effect of Idleness, it may not unreasonably be feared, that where there is most of the Cause, there will be som of the Effect. And indeed, it would puzzle one to conjecture, how that round of formal Visits among Persons of Quality should be kept up without this: That their Visits should be only a dumb Shew none will suspect among women; and when the unfashionable themes of Houswifery, Piety, &c. are excluded, there will not remain many Topics of Discourse, unless this be called into supply. And this indeed is a most inexhaustible reserve, it having so many springs to feed it that 'tis scarce possible it should fail. And when 'tis farther considered, how apt a minister it is to Envy, Spleen, Revenge, and other feminine Passions, we cannot suppose it can be unacceptable where any of those bear sway. But I believe it is not more frequently introduc'd by any thing then the vanity of Wit, which has no where a more free and exorbitant range than in censuring and deriding; nay, finds not only Exercise but Triumph too, vain Persons seldom considering the Infirmities or Follies of others, without some Complacencies, and assuming reflections on themselves; which how unagreeable it renders this liberty of talking to that Modesty we recommend, is obvious enough, and would God 't were only opposit to that; but it is no less so to all the obligations of Justice and Charity also, which are scarce so frequently violated by any thing, as by this licentiousness of the tongue.

13. There is yet another vice of it, for which the female Sex has bin generally accus'd, and that is reveling of secrets; an infirmity presum'd so, incident to them, that *Aristotle* is said to have made it one of the three things he solemnly repented of, that he had ever trusted a Secret with a Woman. But by how much the greater prejudice they lie under in this respect, the greater ought to be their caution to vindicate not only their Persons, but their Sex, from the imputation, which is indeed extremely reproachful:
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this blasting humor being a symp.on of a loose impotent soul, a kind of incontinence of the mind, that can retain nothing committed to it; but as if that also had its Diabetic passion, perpetually and almost insensibly evacuating all. And indeed however we are willing to appropriate this to the Sex, yet the fault is owing only to this ill constitution of the mind, which is oft-times no less visible in men; as on the contrary, those women who by reason and Vertue have acquir'd a Solidity and Firmness of mind, are as sure repositories of a Secret, as the most masculine confident; and such I have no intent to involve in this charge, but rather, by proposing their example to the rest, shew that nature has put them under no fatall necessity of being thus impotent. A secret is no such unruly thing, but it may be kept in: they may take the Wise mans words for it, *Eccus. 19. 10. If thou hast heard a word let it die with thee, and be bold, it will not burst thee.*

14. This is a piece of daring manliness, which they may affect without breach of Modesty; would God they would take it in exchange for that virile Boldness, which is now too common among many even of the best Rank. Such a degenerate age do we now live in, that every thing seems inverted, even Sexes; whilst men fall to the Effeminacy and Niceness of women, and women take up the Confidence, the Boldness of men, and this too under the notion of good Breeding. A blush (tho formerly reputed the color of Vertue) is accounted worse manners then those things which ought to occasion it, and such as nothing but the simplicity of a Country Girl can excuse. But the infirmity for the most part proves very corrigible; a few weeks of the Town Discipline wears of that piece of Rusticity, and advances them to a modish Assurance. Nor is that design'd to terminate in it self, but 't is to carry them on; till they arise to a perfect Metamorphosis, their Gesture, their Language, nay sometimes their habit too being affectedly masculine; so that what *Tacitus*, speaks of *Vitellius* in relation to his being a Prince, we may apply to them and say, that *If others did not remember them to be women, themselves could easily forget it.*

15. Yet, were this affectation confin'd only to the more innocent indifferent things, 't were more tolerable; but as it extends farther, and there are women who think they have not made a sufficient escape from their sex, till they have assumed the Vices of men too. A sober modest dialect is too effeminate for them: a blustering ranting stile is taken up, and (to shew them proficient in it) adorn'd with all the Oaths and Imprecations their memory or invention can supply; as if they meant to vindicate their sex from the imputation of Timorousness by daring God Almighty. 'Tis true indeed, an Oath sounds gratingly out of whatever mouth, but out of a womans it hath such an uncouth harshness, that there is no noise on this side Hell can be more amazingly odious; yet this is a music this discordant age hath intoduc'd, no former having I think ever heard it in places at all civiliz'd: so that the female swearers want that poor shadow of excuse the men pretend to, it having bin so far from customary, that the unwontedness could not but force them to some industry and pains, ere they could acquire the habit, and set up for female Hectors; an essay, wherein they have been very kind to the masculine, by shewing the world there can be something worse.

16. 'Tis said there want not some who compleat the demonstration by the other parrallel quality of Drinking also; a vice detestable in all, but prodigious in women, who put a double violence upon their nature, the one in the intemperance, the other in the immodesty; and tho they may take their immediate copy from men, yet (to the praise of their proficiency) they out-do their Exemplar and draw near the original: nothing human being so much beast as a drunken woman. This is evident enough if we look on the meer surface of the crime; but if we dive farther into its inferences and adherencies, the affirmation is yet more irrefragable. She who is first a prostitute to Wine, will soon be to Lust also; she has dismiss her Guards, discarded all the suggestions of Reason, as well as Grace, and is at the mercy of any, of every assailant. And when we consider how much fuller the world is of *Ammons* then *Josephs*, it will not be hard to guess the fate of that womans Chastity, which has no other bottom then that of mens. So that unless her

vice

vice secure her virtue, and the loathsomness of the one prevent attempts on the other; 'tis scarce imaginable a woman that loses her Sobriety should keep her honesty: that indeed I might more properly have made this reflection when I come to speak of Modesty in the second notion of it as it is opposed to Lightness and Wantonness, but it falls not much amiss now, to be the introduction to it.

17. And if we consider Modesty in this sense, we shall find it the most indispensable requisite of a woman; a thing so essential and natural to the sex, that every the least declination from it, is a proportionable receding from Womanhood, but the total abandoning it ranks them among Brutes, nay sets them as far beneath those, as an acquired vileness is below a native. I need make no collection of the verdicts either of the Philosophers or Divines in the case, it being so much an instinct of nature, that tho too many make a shift to suppress it in themselves, yet they cannot so darken the notion in others, but that an Impudent woman is lookt on as a kind of Monster; a thing diverted and distorted from its proper form. That there is indeed a strange repugnance to nature, needs no other evidence than the struggling, and difficulty in the first violations of Modesty, which always begin with regrets and bluthes, and require a great deal of Self-denial, much of vicious Fortitude, to encounter with the recoilings and upbraidings of their own minds.

18. I make no doubt but this age has arriv'd to as compendious arts of this kind, as industrious vice can suggest, and we have but too many instances of early proficient in this learning; yet I dare appeal even to the forwardest of them, whether at first they could not with more ease have kept their virtue then lost it. Certainly such are the Horrors and Shames that precede those first Guilts, that they must commit a rape upon themselves (force their own reluctancies and aversions) before they can become willing prostitutes to others. This their seducers seem well to understand, and upon that score are at the pains of so many preparatory courtings, such expence of presents too; as if this were so uncouth a crime, that there were no hope to introduce it but by a confederacy of some more familiar vices, their Pride or Covetousness.

19. The

19. The best way therefore to counterminne those Strag-
glers of men, if for women to be suspiciously vigilant
even of the first approaches. He that means to defend a Fort,
must not abandon the Outworks, and she that will secure
her Chastity, must never let it come to too close a siege,
but repass the very first and most remote insinuations of a
tempter. Therefore when we speak of modesty in our pre-
sent notion of it, we are not to oppose it only to the grosser
sort of Incontinency, but to all those misbehaviours, which
either discover or may create an inclination to it; of which
sort is all lightness of carriage, wanton glances, obscene
discourse; things that shew a woman so weary of her honor,
that the next comer may reasonably expect a surrender, and
consequently be invited to the Assault. Indeed they are
such, that one would rather think them the result of many
acts, then meerly the Prologue to one, and yet nothing
but a custom of private sin, could supply impudence enough
to do what is so publicly scandalous; and where this is
found in those of any considerable age, charity it self can
scarce pass a milder censure. Yet possibly in those of the
youngest sort, they may at first be taken up (as their dress
) meerly in imitation of others, embrac'd implicitly upon
the authority of those, whose examples govern the medes,
When a poor girle, who has still so much of the child as to
admire every thing that glitters, sees these things used by
the gay people of the world, 'tis no wonder if she take
these as part of their accomplishments, and, upon peril of
that formidable calamity of being unfashionable, conform
to them: Which yet does not so much extenuate the guilt
of those few seduced persons, as it aggravates that of the
seducers, and attests the strange corruption of the age, that
those things which the less hardned sort of prostitutes were
formerly ashamed of, should now pass into the frequency
and avowedness of a fashion, become a part of Discipline
and Institution of youth; as if vice now disdain'd to have any
punies in its school, and therefore by a preposterous antici-
pation, make its pupils begin where they were wont to
end, initiates them at first into that shamefulness, which
was wont to be the product only of a long habit: what the
end will be of these Piqueerers in impudence, who thus put
their

their vertu on the forlorn hope, is easie to divine. Yet not this the only state of danger: they who keep their ranks and tho they do not provoke assaults, yet stay to receive them, may be far enough from safety. She that lends a patient ear to the praises of her Wit or Beauty, intends at first perhaps only to gratify her vanity; but when she is once charm'd with that Sirens song, bewitcht with that Flattery, she insensibly declines to a kindness for that person that values her so much: and when that spark shall be blow'd up by perpetual remonstrances of Passion, and perhaps little Romantique artifices of pretending to dye for her, with a thousand other tricks, which lust can suggest, 'twill like the *Naphra* Naturalists speak of, in a moment grow to an unquenchable flame, to the ruine both of her vertu and honor.

20. Let no woman therefore presume upon the innocence of her first intentions; she may as well upon confidence of a sound constitution, enter a pest-house and converse with the plague, whose contagion does not more subtly insinuate it self, then this sort of temptation. And as in that case she would not stay to define what were the critical distance, at which she might approach with safety, but would run as far from it as she could; so in this, it no less concerns her, to remove her self from the possibility of danger, and (how unfashionable soever it be) to put on such a severe Modesty, that her very looks should guard her, and discourage the most impudent assailant. 'Tis said of *Philopemen*, that the *Lacedemonians* finding it their interest to corrupt him with mony, they were yet so possess'd with the reverence of his vertues, that none durst undertake to attaque him; and sure 'twere not impossible for women to arrive at the same security: such an authority there is in *Verru*, that where 'tis eminent, 'tis apt to controule all loose desires, and he must not be only lustful but sacrilegious, that attempts to violate such a Sanctuary.

21. But perhaps that sex may fear, that by putting on such a Strictness, they shall lose the glory of their Beauty; which is now chiefly estimated by the number of those who court and adore them. To this in the first place I must say, that they are miserable Trophies to Beauty that must be

built

built on the ruins of vertu and honor; and she that to boast the length of her hair should hang her self in it, would but act the same folly in a lower instance.

22. But then secondly, 't is a great mistake to think their Beauty shall be the less prized, since 'tis incident to mans nature to esteem those things most that are at distance, whereas an easie and cheap descent begets contempt. So long as they govern themselves by the exact rules of Prudence and Modesty, there lustre is like the Meridian Sun in its clearness, which tho less approachable, is counted more glorious; but when they decline from those, they are like that Sun in a cloud, which tho safer to gaze on, is not half so bright. But besides these collateral advantages, 't is certain that Modesty gives an immediat and direct improvement to Beauty, for tho men for their own vicious ends wish them sever'd, yet they cannot but think they are the most amiable when united, and you shall hear them often commend the aspect of that Modesty, which they would fain circumvent.

23. But in the 3d. place, there is nothing but such a Reservedness that can indeed make their Beauty triumphant. Parly and conquest are the most distant things; and she that descends to treat with an assailant, whatever he may tell her of his being her captive, 'tis but in order to the making her his; which when she once is there is no state of servitude half so wretched, nothing in the world being so slavishly abject as a prostitute woman. For besides all the interest of another life which she basely resigns, she sacrifices all that is valuable in this: her reputation she puts wholly in his power that has debauched her, and which is worse her reformation too. If she should have a mind to return to vertu, she dares not for fear he should divulge her former strayings from it: so that, like *Caecilie*, she is engag'd to future evils to secure the past. Yea she subjects her self not only to his lust, but to all his humors and fancies, nay even to all those who have bin instrumental to their privacies, none of them all being to be displeas'd for fear of blabbing: and when 'tis remembred, what a sort of cattel they are, which are the engines in such affairs, there can scarce be any thing more deplorable then to be within their

their lash. 'Tis true indeed, some have found a way to cure this uneasiness by being their own delators, not only confessing but boasting their crime, and by an impudent owning prevent all accusation: yet even this serves but to attest the intolerableness of the former condition, when this worst of mischiefs is chose as a rescue, Their impatience of being alwaies in awe, makes them take up that resolution for infamy, which *Cæsar* did for death, who said 'twas better to dye once then to be alwayes in fear. And tho this desperate remedy may cure the fear, yet it ascertains the reproch; for whereas in the impeachment of others there is place for doubt, and charity may prompt some to disbelieve it, yet when the fact is justified by the offender, the evidence is uncontrollable and withal doubles the infamy. For, besides that which adheres to the crime there is a distinct portion due to the impudence; yet like the Scorpion it must cure its own sting, and tho it increases the obloquy, yet it deadens the sence of it.

24. But when they have thus steel'd their forheads against all impressions of shame, they are still liable to many other painful effects of their sin. What fears of being abandoned, what jealousies of rivals, do often torture them? And indeed not without ground: for they cannot but know, that the same humor of variety which engaged their Paramors in their love, may do the same for another, and another, and so on: it being as possible to grasp the air, as to confine a wandering lust. Besides, what anxious apprehensions have they of the approach of age, which they are sure will render them loathed and despicable, as also of all intermedial decays of Beauty? How critically do they examine their glass? and every wrinkle that it represents in their face, becomes a deep gash in the heart. But if they have at any time the leisure (or indeed the courage) to look inward the view is yet more dreadful, a deform'd soul, spoild of its innocence, and rendred almost as brutish as the sin it hath consented to, But tho it be in some respects like the beast that perisheth, it is not it, cannot be, in that which would most avail it: an endless being it cannot lose, nor can it expect any thing from that preeminence of its nature, but an infinity of misery. This is such an amazing
con-

contemplation, as, methinks, were it insisted on, should allay the hottest blood; no impure flames being so fierce as to contest with those of unquenchable fire. It is therefore tho' a very impious, yet no unskillful artifice of those, who would vitiate women in their manners, to corrupt them in their Principles, and by extinguishing all hopes or fears of another World, perswade them to immerse boldly into all the abominations of this. 'Tis said, this is now an art of wooing, the modern prelude to the basest proposals: it seems this age dares not trust only to the former waies of seducement, fears there will not be women enough that will forget the interests of another World; and therefore is fain to set up a new party of others to disbelieve it. And I fear that design has bin too prosperous; many women are so much more concerned for their bodies than their souls, that they are contented the one should be elevated upon the depression and debasement of the other; and whilst with a vain transport, they can hear their outward form applauded as Angelical, or Divine, they can very tamely endure to have their better part vilified and despised, defin'd to be only a puff of air in their nostrils, which will scatter with their expiring breath, or, in the Atheist's phrase, *Wisd. 6. 6. vanish as the soft air*. Whereas they should consider, that they who preach this doctrine to them, design it only to infer a pernicious use. 'Tis a maxim in Politics, that those counsels are suspiciously to be scan'd, which carry in their front the advisers interest; which certainly is never more visible than in this case, he that once gains this point, never needing to contest for all the rest. For he that can perswade a woman out of her soul, will soon command her body, and then what was at first his interest, becomes hers at last: and her wishes of the mortality of her soul, are much stronger than 'tis possible her belief of it could be: which confirms abundantly my affirmation of the servile, wretched condition of such a person. For if we judg that a very severe slavery, which makes people desirous to resign a temporal being, what shall we think of that which provokes them to renounce an eternal?

25. And now by this gradation of mischiefs we may judge of the deplorable state of those who have abandonned their Vertue; wherein I doubt not the consciences of many cannot only attest, but much improve the description; and all I shall say to such, is, only to consult that bosom monitor which till they do all Homilies will be insignificant. My design was not therefore to tell them what they too well feel, but only to point out their wracks as warnings to others.

26. Let those therefore who are yet untainted, and by being so, have their judgments clear and unbiaſt, conſider ſoberly the miſery of the other condition, and that not only to applaud, but ſecure their own; and when ever the outward pomps and gaudy ſplendors of a vitiated woman ſeem, like that of *Creſus*, to boaſt their happineſs, let them look through that Fallacy, and answer with *Solon*, that *those only are happy who are so at their end*. Their moſt exquisit deckings are but like the garlands on a beaſt deſign'd for Sacrifice; their richeſt gems are but the chains, not of their ornament but ſlavery; and their gorgeous apparel, like that of *Herod*, covers perhaps a putrid body, (for even that doth not ſeldom prove their fate) or however a more putrid ſoul. They who can thus conſider them, will avoid one great ſnare; for 'tis not alwayes ſo much the luſt of the fleſh, as that of the eyes which betrays a woman. 'Tis the known infirmity of the Sex, to love gaiety, and a ſplendid appearance, which renders all temptations of that ſort ſo connatural to them, that thoſe who are not arriv'd to a more ſober eſtimate of things, will ſcarce be ſecure. It will therefore be neceſſary for them to regulate their opinions, and reduce all ſuch things to their juſt value, and then they will appear ſo trifling, that they can never maintain any competition with the more ſolid intereſts of Vertu and Honor. For thoſe terms ſeem in this looſe age to be exploded; yet where the things are viſible they extort a ſecret veneration, even from thoſe who think it their concern publicly to deride them: whereas on the other ſide a defection from them expoſes to all the contempt imaginable, render them deſpis'd even by thoſe who betrai'd them to it, leaves a perpetual blot upon their

Names,

Names, and their Family. For in the character of a woman, let Wit and Beauty, and all female accomplishments stand in the front; yet if wantonneſs bring up the rear, the Satyr ſoon devours the Panegyric, and (as in an Echo) the laſt words only will reverberate, and her vice will be remembred when all the reſt will be forgot. But I need not declame upon this theme; the Son of *Syrach* has done it to my hand, in many paſſages, but eſpecially *Eccleſ.* 23. to which I refer the reader.

27. What hath bin already ſaid, is I ſuppoſe, ſufficient to convince every woman how much it is her concern to keep herſelf ſtrictly within the bounds of Modesty and Vertu. In order to which, there is nothing more important then a judicious choice of their Company; I mean not onely for men, but women alſo: vice is contagious, and this eſpecially has that worſt quality of the Plague, that 'tis malicious, and would infect others. A woman that knows her ſelf ſcandalous, thinks ſhe is reprocht by the vertu of another, looks on her as one that is *made to reprove her wayes*, as it is, *Wiſd.* 2. 14. and therefore in her own deſence ſtrives to level the inequality, not by reforming her ſelf, (that ſhe thinks too hard a task) but by corrupting the other. To this end, ſuch as are willing to ſcrew themſelves into an acquaintance, will be officiouſly kind, and by all arts of condeſcention and obliging, endeavour to enſnare a woman of reputation into their intimacy. And if they ſucceed, if they can but once entangle her into that cobweb-friendſhip; they then, ſpider-like, infuſe their venom, never leave their vile inſinuations till they have poiſoned and ruined her. But and if on the other ſide they meet with one of too much ſagacity to be ſo entrapp'd; if they cannot taint her Innocence, they will endeavour to blaſt her Fame: repreſent her to the World to be what they would have made her: that is in the *Psalmiſts* phraſe, *ſuch a one as themſelves*, *Psalm.* 50. 24. ſo that there is no converſing with them, but with a manifeſt peril either of Vertu or Honor, which ſhould methinks be a ſufficient diſſwaſive. 'Tis true, 'tis not alwayes in ones power to ſhun the meeting with ſuch perſons, they are too numerous, and too intruding to be totally avoided; unleſs, as

St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 5. 10. *one should go out of the World*. But all voluntary converse supposes a choice, and therefore every body that will may refrain that, may keep on the utmost frontiers of civility, without ever suffering an approach towards intimacy and familiarity.

28. And sure were this distance duly observed, it might be of excellent use a kind of lay Excommunication, which might come very seasonably to supply the want of the Ecclesiastic now out-dated. And this seems very well to agree with the sense of *Solon*, the wise *Athenian* Law-giver who, besides that he shut the Temple-doors against them interdicted them the sacred Assemblies, made it one of his laws, that an Adulterers should not be permitted to wear any ornaments, that so they might in their dress carry the note of their infamy. Should we have the like distinction observed, I fear many of our gayest birds would be unplumed, and tho the same be not now an expedient practicable, yet the former is, and might be of very good use. For beside that already mentioned of securing the innocent, it might perhaps have a good effect on the guilty, who could not but reflect with some shame on themselves, if they were thus singled out and discriminated; whereas whilst they are suffered to mix with the best Societies, (like hurt Deer in a herd) they flatter themselves they are undiscernable.

29. But indeed the advantage of this course is yet more extensive, and would reach the whole Sex, which now seems to lie under a general scandal, for the fault of particular persons. We know any considerable number of smutty ears casts a blackness on the whole field, which yet were they apart, would perhaps not fill a small corner of it: and in this uncharitable age, things are apt to be denominated not from the greater but worse part: whereas, were the precious severed from the vile, by some note of distinction, there might then a more certain estimate be made: and I cannot be so severe to woman-kind, as not to believe the scandalous part would then make but a small shew which now makes so great a noise,

30. Besides this I can suggest but one way more for women of honour to vindicate their Sex, and that is by making their own vertu as illustrious as they can: and by the bright shine of that, draw of mens eyes from the worser prospect. And to this there is required not only innocnce, but prudence: to abstain, as from all real evil, so from the appearance of it too, 1 Thess. 5. 22. not, by any doubtful or suspicious action, to give any umbrage for censure but as the Apostle sayes in another case, 2 Cor. 11. 11. *to cut off occasion from them that desire occasion*; to deny themselves the most innocent liberties, when any scandalous inference is like to be deduc'd from them. And tho perhaps no caution is enough to secure against the malicious, and the jealous; tho'tis possible some black mouth may asperse them, yet they have still *Plato's* reserve, who being told of some who had defam'd him, *'tis no matter said he, I will live so that none shall believe them.* If there lives be such, that they may acquit themselves to the sober and unprejudiced, they have all the security can be aspir'd to in this world; the more evincing attestation they must attend from the unerring Tribunal hereafter; where there lyes a certain appeal for all injur'd persons. who can calmly wait for it.

SECT. II.

Of Meekness.

1. **I**N the next place we may rank Meekness as a necessary feminine Vertu ; this even nature seems to teach, which abhors monstrosities and disproportions, and therefore having allotted to women a more smooth and soft composition of body, infers thereby her intention, that the mind should correspond with it. For tho the adulterations of art, can represent in the same Face beauty in one position, and deformity in another, yet nature is more sincere, and never meant a serene and clear forehead, should be the frontis-piece to a cloudy tempestuous heart. 'Tis therefore to be wisht they would take the admonition, and whilst they consult their glasses, whether to applaud or improve their outward form, they would cast one look inwards, and examine what symmetry there is held with a fair outside, whether any storm of passion darken and overcast their interior beauty, and use at least an equal diligence to rescue that, as they would to clear their face: from any stain or blemish.

2. But it is not nature only which suggests this, but the God of nature too, Meekness being not only recommended to all as a Christian vertu, but particulariy enjoind to women as a peculiar accomplishment of their Sex, 1 Pet. 3. 4. where after the mention of all the exquisit and costly deckings of art, this one ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is confronted to them, with this eminent attestation, that it is *in the sight of God of great price*, and therefore to all who will not enter dispute with God, and contest his judgment, it must be so too. Now tho Meekness be in it self a single entire vertu, yet it is diversifi'd, according to the several faculties of the soul, over which it has influence; so that there is a Meekness of understanding, a Meekness of the Will, and a Meekness of the Affections; all which must concur to make up the Meek and quiet spirit.

3. And

3. And first for the Meekness of the Understanding, it consists in a pliability to conviction, and is directly opposite to that sullen adherence observable in too many; who judge of tenets not by their conformity to truth and reason, but to their prepossessions and tenaciously retain'd opinions, only because they (or some in whom they confide) have once own'd them: and certainly such a temper is of all others the most obstructive to Wisdom. This puts them upon the chance of a Lottery, and what they first happen to draw determines them meerly upon the privilege of its precedency, so that had *Mahomet* first seiz'd them, his tenure would have bin as indefeasible, as *Christ's* now. How great the force of such prejudices are, we may see by the oppositions it rais'd against Christian doctrine in gross at its first promulgation: the *Jews* blind Zeal for the Traditions of their Fathers, engaging them in the murder even of that very *Messias* whom those Traditions had taught them to expect, and after in the persecution of that doctrine which his Resurrection had so irrefragably attested. And to justify the propriety of this observation, to those I now write to, 'tis expressly affirm'd, to *Acts* 13. 50. That they made use of the zeal of the female Proselytes for that purpose. *The Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and rais'd a persecution against Paul and Barnabas.* So that 'tis no unseasonable advice to such, to be sure they see well their way before they run too fierce a carriage in it: otherwise the greatest heat without light, does but resemble that of the bottomless pit, where flames and darkness do at once cohabit.

4. But whilst I decry this prejudicate stiffness, I intend not to plead for its contrary extreme, and recommend a too easie flexibility: which is a temper of equal, if not more ill consequence than the former. The adhering to one opinion can expose but to one error, but a mind that lies open to the effluxes of all new tenets, may successively entertain a whole ocean of delusions: and to be thus yielding, is not a Meekness but Servileness of Understanding. Indeed 'tis so great a weakness of mind, that the Apostle sinks it somewhat below the impotence of women, and resembles it to that of children, *Eph.* 4. 14. yet it seems

the folly of some women had levell'd them with children in this matter, for the same Apostle takes notice of such, to whom as he gives the Epithet of silly, so the latter part of the Character speaks them incorrigibly so *ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. a description which if we compare with our times we must think prophetic. For how many instances hath this age given us of women so led captive; who being either affected with the novelty, or seduced by the pretended zeal of a new teacher, have given up their understanding to him: and for a while this strong man has kept possession, but when a stronger then he hath come it has fared as with him in the Gospel, a louder zeal or a newer doctrine soon divides his spoile: and that by force of the very same principle, on which he set up, which within a while undermines the latter also, and so successively: till the poor Proselyte has bin hurried through all the mazes of wild error, and at last perhaps (like a palate distracted by too much variety) she fixes upon that which at first she most decried. This has bin eventually true in some, who setting out in the fiercest detestation of Popery, have wandred so long like the blinded *Syrians*, 2 King. 6. 20. that they have at last found themselves in the midst of *Samaria*: by an insensible circular motion bin brought about to that Religion, from which alone they designed to fly. So little do itching ears know whether they may be carried, and indeed the ear when infected with that prurient humor may vie Mischiefs with the tongue, which St. James tells us, Chap. 3. 25. *is* (tho a little member) *a world of iniquity*.

5. 'Tis therefore the most important concern of all, to fortifie that so assailable part: but 'tis especially so of women, not only in respect of that natural imbecillity, which renders them liable to seducement, but also because the opinion of their being so, makes them particularly aim'd at by seducers. For as he who is to put off adulterated wares, will chuse the most unwary chapmen, so these Sophisticators of Divinity, desire the most undiscerning Auditors. And truly that so many of that Sex are so, I do not so much impute to any natural defect, as to the loose notions they have of Religion, of which they have perhaps some general

neral confused apprehensions, but have so little penetrated the depth of it, that they know not why they are *Christians*, rather than *Turks*, why of the Church of *England*, rather than of that of *Rome*, or *Geneva*. And while they are thus unhixt, and have no better principle than custom and compliance: they have nothing to answer to any the grossest deceit that can be obtruded upon them, which for ought they know or have consider'd; may be as true as any thing they formerly profess. Now when any one in this condition shall be assaulted, not only by the repeated importunities of false teachers, but also by ingeminated threatnings of hell and damnation, she is like one awaked by the outcry of fire, and in that amaze will be apt to run where-ever the first discoverer of her danger shall lead her.

6. I shall therefore most earnestly recommend it as the best Antidote against the poison of novel doctrines, to examin well the grounds of the old; for want of this it is that our Church has bin exposed to so many frivolous cavils, it being too incident to the perverse Pride of humane nature, to speak evil of things we understand not. And had our she-zealots first consulted some sober guides, and from them understood upon what grounds the Practice as well as Doctrine of our Church was founded, they could not so easily have bin carried away by every wind of doctrine, as the Apostle phrases it, *Eph. 4. 14.*

7. Indeed this is no more then common justice exacts; which forbids the condemning even the vilest malefactor unheard, (and unheard and not understood, are in this case terms equivalent) yet sure they owe something more to that Church from whose ministry themselves must confess to have derived their Christianity, in whose bosom they have bin cherisht, and consequently may plead a mothers right in them; so that unless possession, which fortifies Civil rights, destroy the Ecclesiastic; she may challenge besides that natural justice, (which is the common due of of humanity) a parental respect and reverence, a debt which is sure very ill answered by those, who cast off her obedience before they have at all considered what it is she commands. And if the abdicating a child be a thing so unnatural, as needs some very important cause to justify it;

the renouncing of a Parent must require a reason as far transcending that as the guilt does, if it be causeless; and such it must inevitably be in all, who for want of due examination, suffer themselves to be led into groundless prejudices and disgusts.

8. To prevent that guilt, and a multitude of others which spring from it: It must again repeat my Proposal, that woman of Quality (who are presumed to want neither Parts nor leisure for it) would a little look into the inside of the Religion they profess; if it be a true one, 'twill bear the inspection, truth never shunning the light: if it be not, the discovery cannot be too early. And indeed among the many remarkable impresses of truth our Church bears, this is one, that she does not blindfold her Proselytes, leave them the use of their discerning Faculty, and does not by obtruding upon them an implicit belief, force them to lay down their Reason when they take up their Faith. And now why should not Ladies spend a few of their many idle hours in this inquisition, I mean not to embark them in a maze of controversies, but only to discern those plain grounds of Truth of which our Church builds: which if well digested, will prove a better amulet against delusion than the reading whole *Tomes* of Disputations, more apt to distract than fortify their understandings. And had they thus done, had their minds been ballasted by sober principles, so many of them had never made up the triumphs of so many and so various seducers. And tho' to such this advertisement may come too late (like assistance after a defeat) yet it may be a seasonable caution to others: and to those I offer it, as that very temper wherein consists that rational Meekness of the understanding I would recommend to them, which is equally violated by a blind obstinacy, or as blind a flexibility.

9. A second sort of Meekness is that of the Will, which lies in its just subordination, and submission to a more supreme Authority, which in Divine things is the Will of God; in Natural or Moral right Reason: and in human Constitutions the command of Superiors: and so long as the Will governs itself by these in their respective Orders, it transgresses not the Meekness requir'd of it. But experience

rience attests, that the Will is now in its depravation an imperious Faculty, apt to cast off that subjection to which it was design'd : and act independently from those motives which should influence it. This God knows is too common in all Ages, all Condition, and Sexes : but the feminine lies more especially under an ill name for it. Whether that have grown from the low opinion conceived of their Reason, less able to maintain its Empire, or from the multiplied habitual instances themselves have given of unruly Wills, I shall not undertake to determin : but either way 'tis, I am sure, so great a reproch, as they should be very industrious to wipe off. And truly I know nothing more incentive to that endeavor, then the having a right estimate of the Happiness as well as Vertu of a governable Will. How calmly do those glide through all (even the roughest) events, that can but master that stubborn Faculty ? A will resign'd to God's, how does it enervate and infeeble any calamity ? Nay indeed it triumphs over it, and by that conjunction with him that ordains it, may be said to command even what it suffers. 'Twas a Philosophical Maxim, that a wise moral man could not be injured, could not be miserable. But sure 'tis much more true of him who has that divine Wisdom of Chrillian resignation ; that twists and inwraps all his choices with God's, and is neither at the pains nor hazard of his own elections : but is secure, that unless Omniscience can be deceived, or Omnipotence defeated, he shall have what is really best for him.

10. Proportionable (tho not equal) to this, is the happiness of a Will regulated by Reason in things within its Sphere : 'tis the dignity of humane Nature, and that which distinguishes it from that of Beasts. Yea, even those grow more contemptible in their kinds, the farther they are removed from it. The stupid sturdiness of an Ass has render'd it Proverbial for folly, when the tractableness of other Animals has temptred some to list them among rationals. Besides, reason affords something of a Basis and Foundation for the Will to bottom on. He that governs himself by reason (that being still the same) will act equally and consonant to himself ; but he that does a thing this moment, only because he will, may the next have as weighty an argument

to do something quite contrary ; and so may spend his whole time in unravelling his *Spiders webs* , as the Prophet rightly calls the vain designs of such brutish men, *Isa. 59. 5.* Not to speak of thee recoilings and upbraidings of the rational faculties, which are the uneasy attendents of those who resist its more direct admonitions ; there is nothing exposes to more secular ruins. An ungovernable Will is the most precipitous thing imaginable , and like the Devil in the Swine hurries headlong to destruction ; and yet deprives one of that poor reserve , that faint comfort of the miserable Pitty ; which will not be so much invited by the misery , as averted by that wilfulness which caused it. Nay indeed , so little can such persons expect the compassion of others , that 'twill be hard for them to afford themselves their own : the consciousness that their calamities are but the issues of their own perverseness , being apt to dispose them more to hate than pitty. And this is no small accumulation of wretchedness , when a man suffers not only directly , but at the rebound too , reinflicts his miseries upon himself by a grating reflection on his own madness. Yea , so great an aggravation is it , that even Hell it self is enhaunced and compleated by it ; all the torments there being edged and sharpr'd by the woful remembrance , that they might once have avoided.

11. In the last place a Will duly submissive to lawful Superiors, is not only an amiable thing in the eyes of others, but exceedingly happy to ones self; 'tis the parent of peace, and order both public and private. A blessing so considerable , as is very cheaply bought with a little receding from ones own will or humor , whereas the contrary temper is the spring and original of infinit confusions , the grand incendiary which sets Kingdoms , Churches , Families , in combustion ; a flat contradiction not only to the word , but even the works of God ; a kind of Anticreative power, which reduces things to that Chaos from whence God drew them. Our age has given us too many and too pregnant instances of its mischievous effects , which may serve to enhaunce the value of that governable malleable temper I now recommend. And as a Will thus resign'd to Reason and just Authority , is a felicity all rational natures should aspire

aspire to; so especially the feminine Sex, whose passions being naturally the more impetuous, ought to be the more strictly guarded and kept under the severe discipline of Reason; for where 'tis otherwise, where a woman has no guid but her Will, and her Will is nothing but her Humour, the event is sure to be fatal to her self, and often to others also.

12. And the hazard of this renders that other restraint of the will, I mean that of obedience to Superiors, a very happy imposition, tho perhaps, 'tis not alwayes thought so, for thole who resist the government of Reason, are not very apt to submit to that of Authority. Yet sure God and nature do attest the particular expedience of this to women, by having placed that Sex in a degree of inferiority to the other. Nay farther 'tis observable, that as there are but three states of life, through which they can regularly pass, *viz.* Virginity, Marriage, and Widowhood, two of them are states of Subjection, the first to the parent, the second to the husband; and the third, as it is casual, whether ever they arrive to it or no, so if they do, we find it by God himself reckon'd as a condition the most desolate and deplorable. If I should say this happens upon that very score that they are left to their own guidance, the sad wracks of many would too much justify the gloſs; but however it evinces, that God sets not the same valu upon their being masterless, which some of them do, whilst he reckons them most miserable, when they are most at liberty.

13. And since Gods assignation has thus determined subjection to be the womens lot, there needs no other argument of its fitness, or for their acquiescence. Therefore when ever they oppose it, the contumacy flies higher then the immediat Superior, and reaches God himself. And I am apt to think there wou'd not many of that timerous Sex dare so far, were it not for some false punctilioes of honor, which (like those among our duellists) have imposed themselves. These represent Meekness and Submission as a silly sheepish quality unfit for women of breeding and spirit: whilst an imperious obstinacy passes for nobleness and greatness of mind. But alas they are woefully mistaken in their notion of a great spirit, which consists in scorning to

do unworthy and vile things, and courageously encountering the adverse events of life, not in spurning at duty, or seeking to pull themselves from that Sphere where the divine Wisdom hath placed them. No sure, stubbornness is the mark only of a great stomach, not of a great mind; and the cruelty of a coward may as well denominate him valiant, as the ungovernableness of a woman can speak her generous.

14. In this I presume I speak the common sense of all, for what value soever they put upon themselves, nothing renders them less acceptable to others; an imperious woman being a plague to her relatives, and a derision to strangers, yea and a torment to her self. Every the least contradiction (which a meek person would pass over insensibly) inflaming such an unruly temper, and transporting her to such extravagances, as often produce very mischievous effects. On the other side if she be humor'd and complied with, that serves only to make her more insolent and intolerable; makes her humors grow to such a height, that she knows not her self what would please her; and yet expects that others should: so that to such a one, we may apply what *Hannibal* said of *Marcellus*, that if he were vanquished, he never gave rest to himself, nor if he were victorious to others. Certainly the uneasiness of a perverse spirit is so great, that could such come out to compare it with the calm and happy serenity of Meekness and Obedience, there would need no other Lecture to commend them to their esteem or practice.

15. The last branch of Meekness is that of Affections, and consists in reducing the passions to a temper and calmness, not suffering them to make uproars within to disturb ones self, nor without to the disquieting of others, and to this regulation Meekness is generally subservient. Yet because the correcting of some particular passions are more immediatly assignable to other vertues, I shall insist only upon that, on which this has a more direct and peculiar influence, I mean Anger, a two edged passion, which whilst it deals its blows without, wounds yet more fatally within. The commotion and vexation which an angry man feels, is far more painful then any thing he can ordinarily inflict

inflict upon another : herein justifying the Epithet usually given to Anger, that it is a short madness, for who that were in his right wits, would incur a greater mischief to do a less. It is indeed so great a distemper of the mind, that he that is possess'd with it, is incompetent for any sober undertaking, and should as much be suspended from acting, as one in a Phrensy or Lunacy. This was the judgment and practice too of *Plato*, who going to chastise a servant, and finding himself grow angry, stopt his correction; a friend coming in and asking what he was doing, *punishing* replies he, *an angry man*, as thinking himself unfit to discipline another, till he had subdued his own passion. Another time his slave having offended him, *I would beat thee*, says he, *but that I am angry*. It were endless indeed to recite the black Epithets given by all Moralists to this vice. It shall suffice to take the suffrage of the wisest of men, one that had acquainted himself to *know madness and folly*, Ecl. 1. 17. and we find it is his sentence, that *anger rests in the bosom of fools*, Ecl. 7. 11.

16. And what is thus universally unbecoming to human nature, cannot sure be less indecent for the gentler Sex: 'tis rather more so, every thing contracting so much more of deformity, by how much it recedes from its proper kind. Now nature hath befriended women with a more cool and temperate constitution, put less of fire and consequently of choler, in their compositions; so that their heats of that kind are adventitious and preternatural, rais'd often by fancy or pride, and so both look more unhandsonly, and have less of pretence to veil and cover them. Besides women have a native feebleness, unable to back and assert their angers with any effective force, which may admonish them 'tis never intended they should let loose to that passion, which nature seems by that very inability to have interdicted them. But when they do it, they render themselves at once despised and abhorr'd; nothing being more ridiculously hateful, then an impotent rage.

17. But as the most feeble insect may sometimes disturb, tho not much hurt us, so there is one feminine weapon which as 'tis always ready, so proves often troublesome, I mean the tongue: which, tho in its loudest clamors can
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naturally invade nothing but the ear, yet even that is a molestation. The barking of a dog, tho we are secure he cannot bite, is a grating unpleasant sound; and wile women seek that way to event their rage, they are but a sort of speaking brutes, and should consider whether that do not reflect more contempt upon themselves, then their most virulent reproches can fix upon others.

18. But some things have had the luck to acquire a formidableness no body knows how, and sure there is no greater instance of it, then in this case. A clamorous woman is lookt on, tho not with reverence, yet with much dread, and we often find things done to prevent or appease her storms, which would be denied to the calm and rational desires of a meeker person. And perhaps such successes have not bin a little accessory to the fomenting the humor; yet sure it gives them little cause of triumph, when they consider how odious it makes them, how unfit (yea intolerable) for human society; let them take the verdict of *Solomon* who declares it better to dwell *Pro. 25. 24. in corner of a house top, then with a brawling woman in a wile house.* Nor does the son of *Sirach* speak less sharply tho more ironically, *Eccl. 26. 27. A loud crying woman and a scold, shall be sought out to drive away the enemy.* And tho he taxes the feminine vices impartially enough, yet there is scarce any of them which he more often and more severely brands then this of unquietness. It seems 'twas a thing generally lookt on, as very insufferable; as appears by *Socrates*, who when he design'd to discipline himself to perfect patience and tolerance, knew no better way of exercise, then to get a shrew to his wife, an excellence that may perhaps again recommend a woman, when we fall to an age of Philosophers; but at present 'twill be hard for any of our *Xantippes* to find a *Socrates*; and therefore that quality is as destructive to their interests in getting husbands, as it is to the husbands quiet when he is get. But I presume I need not declaim farther against this fault, which I suppose cannot be frequent among that rank of women to whom this tract is intended; for if neither moral nor divine Considerations have prevented it, yet probably civility and a gentile education hath: a scold being a creature to be lookt for only in Stalls and Markets, not among

among persons of quality. Yet if there be any that have descended to so a sordid a practice, they have so far degraded themselves, that they are not to wonder if others substract that respect, which upon other accounts they might demand.

19. And to such I should recommend the usual method of Physic, which is to cure by revulsion, let that sharp humor which so habitually flows to the tongue, be taught a little to recoil, and work inward; and instead of reviling others, discipline and correct themselves: let them upbraid their own madness, that to gratifie an impotent, nay a most painful passion, have degenerated from what their nature, their qualities, their education, design'd them. And if they can thus reverse their displeasures, 'twill not only secure others from all their indecent assaults, but it will at last extinguish them; for anger is corrosive, and if it be kept only to feed upon its self, must be its own devourer; if it be permitted to fetch no forrage from without, nor to nourish it self with suspicions and surmises of others nor to make any sallies at the tongue, it cannot long hold out.

20. And how much they will herein consult their interest and their reputation, they may be taught by *Solomon*, who makes it the distinctive sign of a foolish woman to be clamorous, *Prov. 9. 13.* whereas when he gives the character of his Excellent woman; he links Wisdom and Gentleness together, *she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness*, *Pro. 21. 26.* If this verdict may be admitted (as sure it ought, whether we consider his wisdom, or dear bought experience in women) it will confute the common plea of querulous spirits, who think to seem insensible of any the least provocation, is to appear silly and stupid; tho truly if it were so 'twould be full as eligible as to appear mad and raving, as they commonly do in the transport of their fury.

21. To conclude, Meekness is so amiable, so endearing a quality, and so peculiarly embellishing to women, that did they but all consider it with half the attention they do their more trivial exterior ornaments, 'twould certainly be taken up as the universal mode, in all the several variations of it this Section has presented,

SECT. III.

Of Compassion.

1. **O**F near affinity to the Vertu of Meekness, is that of Mercy and Compassion, which indeed can scarce thrive in any place where the former hath not prepared the soil: Anger and Obstinacy being like that rough East-wind which brought the Egyptian Locusts, *Exod. 10. 13.* to eat up every green thing in the Land. A mind harrassed with its own impatiency, is not at leisure to observe, much less to condole the calamities of others. But as a calm and clear day befriends us with a more distinct Prospect of distant Objects; so when all is quiet and serene within us, we can then look about us, and discern what exigencies of others invite our pitty.

2. I need not say much to raise an estimate of this Vertu, since 'tis so essential to our Nature, so interwoven in the composition of Humanity, that we find in Scripture phrase, compassion is generally seated in the most inward sensible part of our frame, the bowels, so *Col. 3. 12. Put on therefore bowels of mercy*, and *Phil. 2. 1. Bowels and mercies*. So that a cruel ruthless person unmans himself, and is by the common vote of mankind to be listed among brutes; nay, not among the better, but only the more hateful noxious sort of them.

3. But this yet more unnatural in the female Sex, which being of softer mold, is more pliant and yielding to the impressions of pitty, and by the strength of fancy redoubles the horror of any sad object; yea so remarkable is this tenderness, that God when he would most magnify his own compassion, illustrates it by that of women, as the highest human instance. Indeed such a propension have women to commiseration, that they are usually taxed with an excess in it; so that any imprudent lenity is Proverbially called, A womanish Pitty, and therefore it may be thought an impertinence to exhort them to that which they can scarce avoid,

avoid. But to this I answer; first, that in this degenerate age, 'tis no news to see people violate their instincts, as well as their duties, and be worse than their nature inclines them; many sins being committed even against the grain, and with violence to constitution.

4. Yet secondly, 'tis not a meer melting of the eyes, or yerning of the bowels I design to recommend: Alas, their tears will not be drink to a thirsty soul, nor will shivering at his nakedness cloath him, this is such an insignificant mercy as St. James describes, saying to a brother or sister, *be ye warmed, be ye filled, but not giving them things needful to the body*, c. 2. 16. Indeed, she that weeps over those distresses she will not relieve, might have bin fit to be enter'd in the list of the mourning women among the Jews and Heathens, who were hired to make up the Tragic pomp of Funerals with their mercenary sorrow, but had no real concern in that loss they seemed to bewail. 'Tis therefore a more active sort of Compassion to which I would invite them; and yet for method sake, I shall consider it under two distinct Heads, Giving, and Forgiving.

5. By Giving, in this place, I mean not a general liberality, (tho that prudently bounded is an Excellence well becoming Persons of Fortune) but only such a Giving as terminates upon the needy, and is applied to succor their indigencies. To give to those from whom they may expect returns, may be a design, but at the best can be but generosity and of frankness of humor. 'Tis only then mercy (as Christ Himself has defined it) when it is to those from whom they can *hope for nothing again*.

6. And in this Vertu women have in former Ages eminently excelled, yea so essential was it, that we find Solomon thought not their character compleat without it, but numbers it among the properties of his Vertuous Woman, *Prov. 31. 20. She stretcheth forth her hand to the poor, and reacheth her hand to the needy*. And it is a little observable, that after he has describ'd her Industry and Diligence for the acquiring of Wealth, this is set in the front of her disbursements, as the principal use she made of it; and precedes her providing Scarlet for her Household, or fine Linnen and Purple for herself, v. 21, 22. The application

is very obvious, and admonishes all that own the same Title of Vertuous Women, to prefer the necessities of others before their own superfluities and delicacies. Nay, if they look farther, and consider who it is that is personated in the poor, that begs in every needy distressed suppliant, and that will finally own every act of mercy as done to himself: methinks they should sometimes think fit to sacrifice even their most moderate enjoiments to their charity; be ashamed to serve themselves before their Savior, or let him stand naked and hungry, whilst they are solacing with that which would relieve him.

7. But how then shall they answer it, who suffer him to be supplanted, not by their needs, but excesses; who have so devoted their hearts and purse to vanity and luxury, that they have neither will nor power to succor the wants of others? How unequal and disproportionate is it, that those who study to fling away money upon themselves, cannot be tempted by any opportunity and distress, to drop an alms to the poor? What a preposterous sight is it to see a Lady, whose gay attire gives her the glittering of the Sun, yet have nothing of its other properties, never to cheer any drooping, languishing creature by her influence? 'Tis the counsel of the son of *Sirach*, *not to give the poor any occasion to curse thee*. Ecclus. 4. 5. But sure such persons do it, if the poor happen not to have more Charity than they exemplify to them. For when they shall find such hard hearts under such soft raiment, see them bestow so much upon the decking their own bodies, and do nothing towards the necessary support of theirs; 'tis a shrewd trial of their Meekness. Poverty is apt of it self to imbitter the spirit, and needs not such an additional temptation.

8. Nay farther, when a poor starving wretch shall look upon one of these gay creatures, and see that any one of the baubles, the loosest appendage of her dress; a fan, a busk, perhaps a black patch, bears a price that would warm his empty bowels; will he not have sharp incitations not only to execrate her pride, and his own poverty but consequently to repine at the unequal distribution of Providence, and add sin to his misery? The denial therefore of an alms may be a double cruelty, to the soul as well as to

to the body. 'Tis said of *Xenocrates*, that a chafed Bird flying to his bosom, he rescued it with much satisfaction, saying he had not betray'd a suppliant; but this is in that case revers'd, and in an higher instance; for what can be more the betraying of a suppliant, then instead of supplying his wants, to rob him of his innocence, and be his snare in lieu of his refuge? This is a consideration I with more deeply impress'd upon the women of this Age; and truly 'tis their concern it should be so; for since at the last day the inquest shall be so particular upon this very thing, 'tis but necessary they should examin how they are fitted to pass that test.

9 Let them therefore keep a preparatory audit within their own brest, reflect upon the expences of their vanity, what the delicacy of their food, what the richness and variety of their cloths, nay what the meer hypocrisies of their dress, in false hair, and complexion has cost them; to which they may also add the charge of their recreations and divertisements, those costly arts of chasing away that time, which they will one day wish to recal: let them I say compute all this, and then confront to it the account of their charity, and I much fear the latter will with many of them be comparatively as undiscernible, as *Socrates* found *Alcibiades's* lands in the Map of the whole world, be so perfectly overwhelm'd, that it will appear little in their own sight and nothing in Gods.

10. For if the poor Widows mite acquired a valu meerly from her poverty, that she had no more; by the rule of contraries we may conclude, how despicable the scanty oblations of the rich are in Gods account. If even their liberality who gave much, was outvied by a farthing, *Mar.* 12. 41. to what point of diminution must their niggardly offerings, who give little, be reduced? especially when they shall be compared with the numerous and costly sacrifices they made to pride and luxury; nay I wish some were not guilty of more then the disproportion, even the total omission of charity, that in a multitude of Taylors bills cannot produce the account of one Garment for the poor, that amidst the delicacies of their own diet (nay perhaps of their dogs too) never order'd so much as the crumbs of
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their Table to any hungry *Lazarus*. But let all such remember, that there will come a time, when one of *Thabirba's* coats, *Acts* 9. 39. will be of more value than all their richest Wardrobes, tho they could number Gowns with *Lucullus's* Cloaks, which the *Roman* Story reports to be 5000, and that when their luxurious fare shall only feast the worms, and render them passive in that Epicurism they acted before, they will wish they had made the bellies of the poor their refectory, and by feeding them nourished themselves to immortality.

11. Let this I say be seriously remember'd now, lest hereafter they fall under the same exprobrating remembrance with the rich man in the Gospel, *Luke* 16. 25. Remember that thou in thy live time receivedst thy good things, and *Lazarus* that which was evil, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. A Text which *St. Gregory* professes was ever sounding in his ears, and made him look with suspicion and dread upon that grandeur to which he was advanced, as fearing it might be design'd as his final reward. With what terror then may those look upon their present good things, who by ingrossing them wholly to themselves, own them as their entire portion, and implicitly disclaim their share of the future? For to that none must pretend, who receive their transitory goods under any other notion, than that of a Steward or Factor: as we may see in the parable of the Talents, where those that had the reward of the five and ten Cities were not such as had consumed their Talents upon their own riot and excesses, but such as had industriously employed them according to the design of their Lord: and if it there fared so ill with the meer unprofitable servant, who had hoarded up his Talent, what shall become of those, who squander away theirs, and can give no account either of use or principal?

12. Were these considerations duly laid to heart, we might hope to see some of the primitive charity revive, when women of the highest rank converted their ornaments and costly deckings into clothing for the poor, and thought no retinue so desirable, so honorable as a train of Alms-folks, but I speak improper, when I make the poor their attendants, for indeed they rather attended the poor,

poor, did not only order the supply of their wants, but were themselves their ministers, waited about their sick beds, dress'd their most loathsome ulcers, and descended to all the most servile offices about them.

13. But these were such heights, such transcendencies of mercy, as required a deeper foundation of humility than will now be often met with: yet let me take the occasion to say, that it may be a good managery of a charity to act (as far as they can) personally in it. For besides that it prevents some abuses and frauds, which deputed agents may sometimes be tempted to, they pay God a double tribute in it, of their persons as well as their fortunes; next they bring themselves into acquaintance with the poor, and by that means correct those contemts and nice disdains, which their own prosperity is too apt to create farther yet, they excite their own compassion, which being a motion of the sensitive part of the mind, cannot be stirr'd so effectually by any thing, as by the present of the object, the most pathetic tragical description of a distress, being not able to affect us half so much as one ocular demonstration. Lastly 'tis an apt means to encrease their thankfulness to Almighty God, whose bounty to themselves must needs make a deeper impression, when 'tis compared with the necessitous condition of others: for things are best illustrated by their contraries, and 'tis too observable in our depraved nature, that we value not things by their real positive worth, but comparatively as they excell others, nor ever make a right estimate of what we enjoy, till our own or others wants instruct us.

14. Upon all these considerations it may be a very becoming useful circumstance in any charitable ministry to be themselves the actors; and to that end 'twill be a very commendable industry to qualify themselves to be helpful to the poor in as many instances as they can; not only opening their purses, but dispensatories too, providing medicines for such as either by disease, or casualty want that sort of relief. A charity which I doubt not is practis'd by many, and I wish it were by more, that our nicer Dames who study only Cosmetics for themselves, would change the Scene, and instead of repairing or disguising their own

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complexions, study the restauration of their decrepit patients limbs. And sure tho it be a less fashionable, 'tis a much better sight, to see a Lady binding up a sore, then painting her face; and she will cast a much sweeter savor in Gods nostrils; with the smell of unguents and balsoms, then with the most exquisit odors and perfumes. For since God professes *Esay* 1. that that very *incense* which was design'd as a part of his worship, *was an abomination to him*, because not accompanied with the Acts of Mercy, we cannot think he will better like of those, which have no higher aim then delicacy and sensuality.

15. But besides this part of mercy in giving, there is another, that of forgiving; which may happen to be of a larger extent then the former: for whereas that was confin'd to the poor, this has no such limits, but as it is possible to be injured by persons of all ranks, so this pardoning mercy is to reach equally with that possibility. This is that part of Charity which we peculiarly call Clemency, a Vertu which not only Christianity, but Morality recommends. The Antient *Romans* had it in such veneration, that they number'd it not only among Vertues but Deities, and built it a Temple: and they were somewhat towards the right in it, for it was, tho not God, yet so eminent an attribute of his, that nothing can more assimilate man unto him.

16. There are many Heroic acts of this kind to be met with among the vertuous Hethens. *Lycurgus* not only forgave *Alexander* who had struck out his eye, but entertain'd him in his house, and by his gentle admonition reclaim'd him from his former vicious life. *Aristid:s* being after signal services and without crime, unjustly banished by his Citizens, was so far from acting or imprecating against them, that at his departure from *Athens* he solemnly prayed the Gods, they might never by any trouble or distress be forced to recal him. So *Phocion* being unjustly condemned, left it as a solemn charge to his son *Phocas*, that he should never revenge his death. A multitude of the like examples might be produced, but we need not borrow light from their faint Tapers, when we have the Sun beams, I mean the Sun of righteousness our blessed Savior, who as he

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has recommended this grace by his precept, so he has signally exemplified it to us in his practice; the whole design of his descent to earth being only to rescue his enemies from destruction, and as every part of his life, so the last Scene of it was particularly adapted to this end, and his expiring breath expended in mediating for his crucifiers; *father forgive them*, Luk. 23. 34. And this copy of his was transcribed by his first followers, the Primitive Christians in their severest Martyrdoms praying for their persecutors.

17. Thus are we in the Apostles phrase *compassed about with a cloud of witnesses*, Heb. 12. 1. of eminent examples, which ought to have a forcible influence upon all, but methinks should not fail to have it on that Sex, whose native tenderness predisposes them to the Vertu, and who need but swim with the stream of their own inclinations. How can we think that their melting eyes should ever sparkle fire, or delight in spectacles of cruelty, that their flexible tender hearts should turn into Steel or Adamant, be incapable of all impressions of pitty? Yet God knows such changes have too often bin seen: woman have not only put off that softness peculiar to them, but the common instinct of humanity, and have exceeded not only savage men but beasts in cruelty. There have bin too frequent instances of the implacable malice, and insatiable cruelties of women: I need not call in the aid of Poetique fiction and tell them of *Clytemnestra*, *Medea*, or the *Belilies*, with hundreds of others, celebrated as instances of Heroic wickedness. There are examples enough in more authentic stories. The *Roman Tullia*, the *Persian Pyrasatis*; and that we may not pass by the sacred Annals, *Fezebel*, and *Aibalia*. I forbear to multiply examples of this kind, of which all ages have produced some so eminent, as have render'd it a common observation, that no cruelty exceeds that of an exasperated woman: and it is not much to be wonder'd at, since nothing can be so ill in its pristine state as that which degenerates from a better. No enmity we know so bitter, as that of alienated friends; no such persecution as that of Apostats, and proportionably no such ferity as that of a perverted mildness. So that the Poets were not much out, who as they represented the Graces under the

figures of women, so they did the Furies too: and since 'tis in their election which part they will act, they ought to be very jealous over themselves. The declinations to any vice are gradual, sometimes at first scarce discernable; and probably the greatest monsters of cruelty, would at the beginning have detested those inhumanities which afterwards they acted with greediness.

18. It concerns them therefore toward those beginnings whose end may be so fatal. She that is quick in apprehending an affront perhaps will not be so quick in dismissing that apprehension; and if it be permitted to stay, 'twill quickly improve, twenty little circumstances shall be suborn'd to foment it with new suspicions, till at last it grow to a quarrel; from thence to hatred, from that to malice, and from that to revenge: and when that black passion has overspread the mind, like an Egyptian darkness it admits no gleam of reason or Religion, but hurries them blindfold to their own ruine often as well as others.

19. Let none think this only a fancy or scheme of Discourse: there have bin too many tragical experiments of its truth: how many men have bin mortally engaged upon no weightier original, then the spleen of a woman? the frantic notion of honor among our Duellists fitly corresponding with the as frantic impulses of feminine revenge, and any imaginary injury (or perhaps but just imputation) to the Lady, obliging her Gallant to rush upon the most real sin and danger. A madness something beyond that which the Romances describe of Knight Errantry; for that generally is for the relief of distressed Damsels, but this is only to humor the too prosperous ones, the insolent and the proud. Those therefore that have observed the common occasions of Duels, have not unfitly divided them between Wine and Women it being hard to say which is the most intoxicating and besotting. The Son of Syrach couples them together, *Ecclus. 19. 2. Wise and Women will make men of understanding fall away.* The many modern examples of this mischief, as they should strike an extreme terror into those Women who have bin any way accessary to the death, or but danger of any man; so are they just matter of caution to all

all, so to regulate their Passions, that they never come within distance of implacability; for if once they arrive there, themselves can give no stop.

20. In order to this, 'twil be well to consider at the first incitation; what the real ground is; perhaps sometimes they are angry (as the Galatians were at St. Paul, Gal. 4. 16.) at those that tell them the Truth; some scandalous, or at least suspicious behavior, may have engaged a friend to admonish them; (an office that has sometimes proved very fatal: those commonly that have most guilt having less patience to hear of it.) And if this be the case 'tis the greatest injustice in the World to make that a quarrel which is really an obligation: and therefore instead of maligning their Monitor, they ought to thank and reverence him. Nay, tho the accusation be not with that candid design, but be meant as a reproch; yet if it be true, it should not excite anger at their accusers, but remorse, and reformation in themselves.

21. It was the saying of a Wiseman, that he profited more by his enemies then his friends: because they would tell him more roundly of his faults: and this is excellently improved by *Plutarch*, in his Tract, Of the benefits to be reap'd from Enemies: so that even a malicious accusation may be a kindness, and consequently ought not to be repaid with an injury. But suppose, in the last place, that the aspersion be not only unkind, but untrue, it will not even then be safe to let loose to their indignation: first, in respect of Prudence, an angry vindication serving the design of the enemy, and helping to spread the calumny: whereas a wise neglect and dissembling does often stifle and suppress it. Secondly, in respect of duty, for all that own themselves Christians, must confess they are under an obligation to forgive, and not to revenge. Now if they intend to pay a real obedience to this Precept, 'twill be the more easie, the sooner they set to it. He that sees his house on fire, will not dally with the flame, much less blow, or extend it, resolving to quench it at last. And anger is as little to be trusted, which if once thoroughly kindled, will scarce expire but with the destruction of the subject it works on.

22. Let therefore the disoblig'd not look back upon the injury, but forward to those mischiefs which too sharp a resentment may betray them to: let them consider, that the boiling of their blood may finally cause the effusion of anothers, and wrath may swell into murder. If they would do this, and instead of those magnifying optics wherein they view the wrong, make use of the other end of the perspective, to discern the dismal event at distance; it would sure fright them from any nearer approach, would keep them within those bounds which their duty prescribes them: and thereby acquaint them with a much greater, and more ingenious pleasure than their highest revenge can give them: I mean that of forgiving injuries, and obliging the injurious. This is a pleasure so pure and refined, so noble and heroic, that none but rational natures are capable of it: whereas that of spight and revenge (if it can be called a pleasure) is a meer bestial one; every the most contemptible animal can be angry when 'tis molested, and endeavor to return the mischief.

23. It should therefore, methinks, be an easie determination, whether to embrace that clemency and compassion which we see exemplified in the wisest and best of men, nay in the Omniscient Immortal God, or that savage fierceness of the ignoblest creatures. This is certain, that no woman would be content to assume the outward form of any of those; why then should they subject their nobler part, the mind, to such a transformation? For, as there are no monsters so deformed, as those which are compounded of man and beast: so among them all, nothing can be more unnatural, more odious, then a woman-Tiger. I conclude all with the advice of Solomon, *Pro. 17. 14. The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be med'd with.* When once a breach is made upon the spirit by immoderate anger, all the consequent mischiefs will flow in, like a rapid stream when the banks are broken down; nor is there any way to prevent it, but by keeping the bounds entire, preserving that tenderness and compassion which God and Nature do equally inforce and recommend.

SECT. IV.

Of Affability.

1. IN the next place we may reckon Affability and Courtesie, which as it is amiable in all, so it is singularly so in women of Quality, and more universally necessary in them than in the other Sex; for men have often charges and employments which do justifie, nay perhaps require somewhat of sternness and austeritie; but women ordinarily have few or no occasions of it, and those who have well digested the former Lectures of Meekness and Compassion, will not be apt to put it on unnecessarily. Now Affability may be considered either as a meer human Accomplishment, or as a divine Vertue; in either notion 'tis commendable; but 'tis the latter that gives it the highest Excellence and Perfection.

2. To begin with the first notion of it, we may take an estimate of its worth by its Cause, and by its Effects. For its Cause, it derives it self either from a native candor, and generosity of mind; or from a noble and ingenious Education, or something jointly from both; and these are as good originals as any thing meerly moral can flow from. And that these are indeed its sources, common experience will attest; those of the greatest Minds, and best Extractions, being usually most condescending and obliging; whereas those of most abject Spirits and Birth, are the most insulting and imperious. *Alexander the Great*; tho terrible in the field, yet was of a gentle, complaisant conversation, familiarly treating those about him; yet *Crispinus, Narcissus, Nymphidius*, and other enfranchis'd bondmen, we find insolently trampling upon the Roman Senators and Consuls. 'Tis therefore a great error for Persons of Honor, to think they acquire a reverence by putting on a supercilious gravity, looking coyly and disdainfully upon all about them; 'tis so far from that, that it gives a suspicion that 'tis but a pageantry of greatness, some mushroom newly sprung up.

that stands so stiff, and swells so much. But instead of teaching others to keep their distance, this fastidious disdain invites them to a closer inspection, that if there be any flaw either in their life or birth, 'twill be sure to be discovered, there being no such prying inquisitor as curiosity, when 'tis egg'd on by a sense of contempt.

3. On the other side, if we consider the effects of Courtesie, they are quite contrary; it endears to all, and often keeps up a Reputation in spite of any blemishes: a kind look or word from a Superior, is strangely charming, and insensibly steals away mens hearts from them. This the Wise men refers to, *Eccclus.* 18. 16 when he prefers a Word before a Gift. And 'tis *Plutarch's* observation of *Cleomenes* King of *Sparta*, that when the Grecians compared his Affability and easiness of Access with the sullen state and pride of other Princes, they were so enamored with it, that they judg'd him only worthy to be a King. And as there is no certainer, so also no cheaper way of gaining love: a friendly salutation is as easie as a frown or reproch; and that kindness may be preserved by them, which if once forfeited, will not at a far greater price be recovered.

4. Besides, when human vicissitudes are considered, it may be a point of Prudence too; the greatest Persons may sometimes want assistance from the meanest; nay sometimes the face of affairs is quite changed, and the wheel of Fortune turns them lowest that were uppermost, and proportionably elevates the meanest. 'Tis wisdom therefore so to treat all, as to leave no impressions of unkindness, since none is so despicable, but may possibly at one time or other have an opportunity to retaliate. 'Twas therefore a prudent as well as an equitable resolution of the Emperor, who said he would so entertain the addressees of his Subjects; as, if he were a Subject, he would wish the Princes should entertain him. A rule very worthy to sway all Persons of Honour in their intercourse with others. And since even among Persons in Command there are degrees, and she which is superior to one, is inferior to another; they have a ready way to compare the civility they pay, with that they expect. Let therefore one who meets with a cold, neglectful Treatment from any above her, examin her own
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resentments, and then reflect : that if she give the like to those below her , they will doubtless have the same sense; and therefore let her resolve never to offer what she so much dislikes to bear, and she that does thus, that makes such inferences, will convert an injury into a benefit; civilize her self by the rudeness of others, and make that ill nurture her own discipline.

5. But hitherto we consider Affability only in its ethnic dress, as it is a human ornament; 'twill appear yet more enamoring upon a second view, when we look on it as being the impress of the Sanctuary, as a divine Vertu. And that it is capable of being so, we have the authority of St. Paul, who inserts it in the number of those Christian Graces which he recommends to his Roman Proselytes; *condescend to them of low estate*, Rom. 12. 6. and that we may the better discern its value, 'tis observable that he links it with the most eminent Vertu of Humility; for it immediately follows his Precept of *be not high minded*. Indeed 'tis not only joyned with it as a Friend or Allie, but derived from it as its stock and Principle; and certainly a more divine extraction it cannot have, Humility being the *Alpha* and *Omega* of Vertues, that which lays the foundation, (without which the most towering Structure will but crush it self with its own weight) and that which perfects and consummates the building also, secures and crowns all other Graces; which when they are most verdant and flourishing, are like *Jonas* his gourd, that may afford some shadow and refreshment for a while, but are apt to breed that worm which will destroy them. When once they are smitten with Pride, they instantly fade and wither; so necessary is humility both for the acquiring and conserving, all that is good in us.

6. We may therefore conclude, that courtesie and obligingness of behavior which proceeds thence, is in respect of its spring and original, infinitely to be preferred before that which descends from no higher stock than natural or prudential motives; and since 'tis natural for every production to have some similitude to that which produces it, we shall find it no less excellent in respect of its properties than its descent; I

I shall instance onely in two, Sincerity and Constancy.

7. For the first as far as Affability partakes of Humility it must of Sincerity also, that being a vertu whose very elements are plainness and simplicity: for as it has no designs which want a cover, so it needs none of those subtilties and sim'lations, those pretences and artifices requisite to those that do. 'Tis the precept of the Apostle, Phil. 2. 3. *In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better then himself*, where we see 'tis the nature of a lowly mind to transfer that esteem to others which he subtracts from himself: now where such an esteem is planted in the heart, it verifies all the expressions and outward significations of respect, and renders the greatest condescensions (which to an insolent humor may seem extravagant and affected) real and unfeigned.

8. On the contrary that courtesie which derives no higher then from meer human principles is not much to be confided in. 'Tis the Psalmists affirmation *that all men are liars*. And therefore there is more then a possibility of deceit in their fairest shews. Sometimes we know smooth and plausible addresses have bin designed as the stile to vile and trecherous practises. The extraordinary blandishments and endearing behavior of *Abolom* to the people, was only to *steal their hearts*, and advance his intended rebellion, 2 Sam. 15. and *David* tells us of some, *whose words were very swords*, Psal. 55. 21. and God knows this age has not so much improved in sincerity, that we should think the same Scenes are not daily acted over among us.

9. But besides all the blacker projects of this kind, which nothing but the event can detect, there is a lower sort of this treachery, which is visible, nay so avowed, that it is one of the most common subjects of mirth and entertainment, I mean that of scoffing and derision, a thing too frequent among all, but I fear I may say very peculiarly among Ladies, those at least of the modish sort, their very civilities and caresses, being often design'd to gain matter of scorn and laughter. Mutual visits we know are an expression of respect, and should flow from a real kindness, but if those now in use be sifted, how few will be found

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of that make? They are at the best formal, a tribute rather paid to custom than friendship, and many go to see those, for whom they are perfectly indifferent whether they find them alive or dead, well or sick. Nay very often they are worse than thus, design'd only to make observations, to bolt out something ridiculous wherewith to sport themselves as soon as they are gone; and least the inquest should return with a *non invenius*, they will accept of the slightest discoveries, the least misplacing of a word, nay of a hair shall be theme enough for a Comedy.

10. But if a poor Country Gentlewoman fall within their circuit, what a stock of mirth does she afford them, how curiously do they anatomise every part of her dress, her mean, her dialect, nay perhaps to improve the Scene, will recommend yet greater absurdities to her, under the notion of the mode, that so she may be the more ample subject of their scorn. Such visits as these are but insidious intrusions, the insinuations of a spy rather than the good office of a neighbor; and when 'tis remembered how great a portion of some womens time is spent in this kind of diversion, we must conclude there have a multitude of acts gone to make up the habit, I wish they would seriously reflect on it, and unravel that injurious mirth by penitential sadness; and either spend their time better than in visiting, or else direct their visits to better purposes; and this they would certainly do if they would exchange their meer popular civilities (that kind of paint and varnish in manners) for that true Christian condescension; which admits of no deceit, but is as transparent as *Drusus* whilst his house should be, that has no secret serves and springs, to move the eyes or tongue a contrary way from the heart, but is in reality all that it pretends to be.

11. A second property of it is Constancy, for as it is true to others, so it is to its self; 'tis founded on the solidest of virtues, and is not subject to those light and giddy uncertainties, that the vulgar civilities are. For he that out of a dislike of his proper worth has placed himself in a state of inferiority, will think it not an arbitrary matter, but a just debt to pay a respect to those no

thinks his betters ; and an humble mind will in every body find something or other to prefer to himself. So that he acts upon a fixt principle , and is not in danger of those contradictions in his manners , which shall render him one day sweet and affable , and another sowre and morose. But such mutations are frequently incident to those who are swayed by other motives , sometimes an interest changes, and then the most fauning Sycophant can transplant his flatteries , and court a new Patron ; yea many times to the despiht and vilifying of the old.

12. Sometimes again , fortune may change ; a man may fall from a prosperous to an adverse state , and then those who were prodigal of their civilities whilst he needed nothing else , will withdraw even those from him , least they should encourage him to demand something more ; an experiment of this *Job* made in his friends (or rather flatterers) whom he fitly compares to winter brooks, running over when not needed , but quite dry when they are

13. But the most frequent change is that of fancy and humor , which has a much more general sway then reason and judgment. This is so observable in the vulgar rabble , that often in an instant they will shift passions, and hate this hour what they doted on the last. Of this all popular states, have afforded many costly experiments, but we need not go farther then the sacred Story , where we find the Acclamations and *Hosannas* of the multitude, quickly converted into *crucifie him* , *crucifie him*. This levity of mind has bin observed so incident to women , that 'tis become almost proverbial ; for by how much their passions are more violent , they are commonly the less lasting , and as they are reckon'd among those colder bodies that are particularly influenced by the Moon , so they seem to bear a great resemblance to her in her vicissitudes and changes ; yet still with a greater degree of uncertainty , for she in all her revolutions obse ves some constant periods. and we can tell in her wain when she will be at full. so that she has a kind of certainty even in her planetary errors ; but what Ephemerides can be framed for some womans humors ? who can tell how
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long the present will last? and what will be the next that will succeed?

14. I need not bring instances of their inconstancy from that common place of passionate widows, who have let a new love sail even through those floods of tears wherewith they bewailed the old: for (besides that that is a case wherein possibly they may find matter enough for retortion) it is here a little wide from my purpose, which designs no farther inquisition then into their ordinary conversation, wherein that love of variety which is so remarkable in their habit, their diet, their diversions, extends it self often to their company, their friendships also and converse. Those intimacies which they cherish lately, quickly grow despicable, and at last nauseous, and consequently their behavior falls from kind and civil, to cold and disdainful. I doubt not this has often bin proved by many of those humble companions, which officiously attend them, who cannot alwayes fix themselves, no not by those flatteries that first introduced them, some new comer perhaps has better refined the Art, and do's the same thing more acutely and ingeniously, and then the old one is to be turned off as too gross a Sycophant; or if they have bin so happy as to light upon some of a more generous temper, who instead of a servile compliance with their humor, and high characters of their worth, entertain them with the true images of themselves and endeavor to make what others only speak them, this is that unpardonable crime which forfeits all degrees of favor, and does not only avert, but incense. A faithful Monitor is as unacceptable as a true Looking-glass to a deformed person, which at the best will be set aside, and escapes well if not broken; and while great persons dispence their favors or their frowns by such perverse measures as these, they will be sure to do it unjustly, as well as unconstantly.

15. I am far from making this an universal charge, I know there are women of the highest quality, that guide themselves by other rules, that are deaf to all the songs of Sirens, and have the prudence to valu a

seasonable reproof before the most extravagant Panegyric; but this is owing to that humility which I am now recommending, without which 'tis as impossible for greatness to be proof against flattery, as it is for a Pinnacle with spreading sails, and a violent gust of wind, to sail steddily without ballast. And the frequent want of this is it which makes it no less frequent to see those unevennesses and inequalities in behavior; those partialities in dispensing even the commonest civilities, which I have now represented.

16. And sure it is none of the meanest attributes due to that excellent vertu of humility that it can thus fix and poise the mind, cure those vertigoes and giddy humors, incident to those who are mounted a loft: and above all that it is a sure Antidote against the most insinuating poison of flattery, a holy spel or amulet against the venom of a Parasite, which the Philosopher justly calls the worst of tame beasts, as a Detractor is of wild: He being indeed a kind of vulture, in the way of seizure, no less than ravine, who first picks out the eyes of that which he designs to prey upon; suffering not the person concern'd, to see any thing of that destruction which he is to feel. And certainly none of the ominous Birds, no night-Raven or screech-Owle can abode half so dismally as these domestic Birds of prey, which are not only presages, but instruments of ruine wheresoever they haunt.

17. 'Tis therefore the universal concern of those that are great and prosperous, to chase them away, as *Abraham* did the Fowles from his Sacrifice, *Gen.* 15. 11. but yet more peculiarly so of those to whom fortune has given a sudden rise, and unexpected grandeur, they being of all others the most obnoxious to this sort of Harpies. The surprizes of prosperity do no less disturb the judgment than those of adversity; and as one who is in an instant snatched up to some high Tower, is so amazed to see himself there that he has no just measure of the altitude, but thinks every thing farther below him than it is: so they that ascend to greatness by swift and rapid motions have their heads so turned that they are apt to overvalue it; and to look with contempt on those who before perhaps

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they thought worth their envie. And on a mind thus prepared, flattery may make any impressions, it suborning even providence as a witness on its side, and inferring from the Dignities obtained, the transcending merit of the obtainer. A piece of Sophistry which the slightest observer may easily confute, all Ages giving instances of those whose Vices have preferred them, and by a strange Chymistry have extracted Honour out of infamous acts. Yet to a mind possess'd with its own admiration, this shall pass for a demonstration: so trecherous a thing is Pride, that it combines with all who design to cheat us: and indeed 'tis not only an accessory, but the principal; none being in danger by others flatteries, who are not first seduced by their own.

18. It will therefore be a point of Wisdom for all Persons of Honour to encrease their caution with their fortune, and as they multiply their Retinues without, so especially to inforce their Guard within, that they become not slaves to their own Greatness, fix not themselves in such a posture of State, as to become immovable to all the offices of Humanity and Civility; nor think that their admission to Greatness is upon the same terms on which the Jews were wont to receive their Proselytes, that they must renounce all their former relations; but to remember that they differ no more from others than as a counter set in the place of thousands or hundreds, does from one set in the place of tens or units. A little transposition may quite alter the case; or however, when they are all taken of the score, they are then indiscriminately tumbled together, and one has no precedence of another, either in place of valy. So undiscernible will be the difference between the greatest Queen, and the meanest Servant, when Death that great Leveller, shall have mixt them; there will be no inquisition in the Grave who came embalmed, or perfumed thither. And, as a Learned man sayes, the Ulcers of *Lazarus* will make as good dust as the Paint of *Jezebel*.

19. But I shall be thought to have out-run my Subject; or instead of that amiable image of Affability, and universal Obligingness, the great Ornament of Life, introduce

duce the grim figure of Death, that fullen Executioner, whom no Gifts no Prayers can mollifie. Yet I cannot yield it wholly impertinent; for, as its final stroke cures all the infirmities of the body, so the fore-sight and contemplation of it is, as much a Catholicon for all the maladies of the mind; especially that of insolence and disdain. For sure they cannot much pride themselves in any exaltation, that remember they must finally fall into the dust: nor arrogantly despise others, who consider that themselves shall one day be insulted over by worms and insects. Such mental descents into the vault or charnel-house, are the best discipline for the demeanor in other places, according to the admonition of the Wise man, *Remember thy end, and thou shalt never do amiss.*

SECT. V.

Of Piety.

1. **L**ASTLY, To compleat and crown all other Excellencies, nothing is so proper, so necessary as Piety and Devotion. This is the salt which seasons all Sacrifices; yea, the Altar which sanctifies the Gift, no good (how splendid soever in the sight of men) being acceptable to God, till it be thus consecrated, and have this seal of the Sanctuary upon it. This is a Vertu truly Divine, as well in its origin as its end; for as it comes from Heaven, (is an efflation of the blessed Spirit) so it tends thither also, and thither raises its Votaries. This is it which sublimates and spiritualizes Humanity, defecates and refines it from all the dregs of mortality; and so wings our earthly lumpish nature, that we can soar aloft to the region of Spirits, and by its raptures make some essay of that state of separation, even while we are linked to the body. This is it which combines us so with God, that we have the same interests, the same choices; nay it does in a
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fort communicate and enterchange proprieties with him; the all Powerful God seems impotent and unable to resist its influence, whilst it invests us feeble wretches in a kind of Omnipotency, by ingaging him for us who can do all things.

2. Now this Piety may be considered either in a larger or more limited sense: in the former 'tis as wide as the whole scheme of Duty, not confined to any one act, but extended to all the commands of God. For as the animal Spirit diffuses its self into all the most distant members of the body; so this more vital Principle has as universal an influence on the mind, stamps that with such an admiration and reverence of God, such a love and complacency in him, that every act is (at least habitually) design'd to obey and glorifie him.

3. In the more limited sense, Piety is taken for our more immediat intercourse with God, in things purely divine, as Adoration, Prayers, Aspirations, and all pantings and breathings of the soul after him: and in this notion 'tis more particularly called Devotion. And this is comprehended in the other, as a part in the whole; nay indeed, as an effect in its cause; for where Piety has not first formed and modelled the soul, there can be no true Devotion. External forms of it there may be, but that is but ceremony and pageantry, the most submissive prostrations are there but like that of *Dagon* before the Ark, the fall of a lifeless trunk; the most elevated eyes but a kind obconvulsive motion; and the most rigid mortifications, but like the cuttings and launcings of *Baal's* Priests. Of this the very Heathen had some notion, and therefore in their worships had many preparatory ceremonies of lustration, and purifying, as being conscious of the incongruity, that unholy Persons should be admitted to Sacred things. And accordingly *Socrates* has excellently (I had almost said Evangelically) defined. *the best way of worshipping God*, to be *the doing what he commands*. Indeed without this our Devotion is meer stratagem and design: we invoke God as we use to cajole men, only to serve a present turn; and of such disingenious addresses, 'tis easie to read the event; or, if we cannot, *Solomon* will instruct us, *Prov.* 15. 8.

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The Prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.

4. To treat of the several branches of Piety in the first notion, is not agreeable to the intended brevity of this Treatise, nor necessary, because there are so many distinct Tracts extant on that Subject; yet I shall the more closely to adapt it to my female Readers, observe the propriety of it to women, not only as it is their greatest ornament and advantage, but especially as they have somewhat more of predisposition towards it in their native temper. God's Laws, which are the rule of Piety, have this common with mens, that they are enforced upon us by the proposals both of punishments and rewards, by that means engaging two of our most sensible passions, Fear and Love; and the female Sex being eminent for the pungency of both these, they are consequently the better prepared for the impressions of Religion.

5. This is so much acknowledged; that our Masculine Atheists make an ill use of it, and are willing to think that Religion owes its force only to the impotence of the subject on which it works, that 'tis only an imposition upon the easie credulity of women, and are content to allow them the inclosure of it; wherein, tho' they sufficiently shew their content of Piety, yet they unawares give a greater honor to that Sex than they intend, whilst they confess it more capable of an assimilation to the supreme Goodness, and of the renewal of God's Image (for to that all Piety is design'd) than their own. And therefore women have so little reason to be ashamed, that they ought to glory in the concession, and gratefully to celebrate the goodness of God to them, who, as he brings light out of darkness, so converts their natural infirmities into a means of spiritual strength, makes the impotencies and defects of their nature subservient to the operation of Grace; and by consecrating their very Passions, makes even those Gibeonites serviceable to the Tabernacle. But then 'tis to be remembred, that the greater is their obligation to comply with this design of Gods, to let their passions run in the channel he has cut for them; so to confine their Fear and Love to spiritual Objects, that

that they make no inordinate eruptions to any thing else, but in all their estimations of things dreadful or desirable, to give still the just deference to that which is eternal.

6. And, as Women in General have this advantage towards Piety, and obligation to it; so particularly those of Quality, who we may suppose to have generally a more early Institution and instruction in it than those of a meaner rank: and besides, have afterwards more opportunities of being built up in the knowledge of their duty, and (by the help of an ingenious education) clearer apprehensions to discern it; and when they do so, have greater obligations to perform it, both in respect of God, of others and themselves.

7. In respect of God they have the greatest tie of gratitude, not only of the common mercies which they partake with the rest of mankind, but for those peculiar, by which they are differenced from others; of which, if they want a just value, let them ask themselves how willing they would be to part with them, how she that has fed delicately would like to be desolate in the street, or *she that has bin brought up in Scarlet, to embrace the Dungbil*, Lam. 4. 5. and according to the aversion they find to such a change, let them estimate their present enjoyment, and the thankfulness it exacts.

8. Secondly, in regard of others, their Piety backt with their secular advantages, may be of more extensive benefit; they have many opportunities of doing good by their influence on others; or if no way else, yet the splendor of their example will by the eminency of their conditions shine (as a light on some high Tower) more perspicuously, and guide many into the same path of Vertu. And certainly 'tis no small obligation that lies on them in this respect; for God, who does nothing without an end worthy of his wisdom, can never be thought to have selected some persons as the objects of his bounty, merely that they may swell and glut themselves with sensual pleasures. No-doubtless, he who is the great Master of the universe, disposes all things for common benefit; and therefore, if He have placed some in an higher

Orb then others, it is that they may have an auspicious influence on those below them; and if they fail in this, they are no longer Stars but Comets, things of ominous and unlucky abode to all about them. I might enlarge on this Subject, but having done it already in the Gentlemans Calling, I suppose it unnecessary since that part is equally adapted to both Sexes.

9. In the last place, they have all obligation to Piety, in respect of themselves, and that in two considerations; the first, of their present danger; the second, of their final account. For their danger, 'tis evident they do not more out-number their inferiors in any thing then in the opportunities, nay solicitations to sin. Wealth and Honor have many snares, and which is worse, do often dispose the mind to such an heedless security, that it takes no care to avoid them: and as in the body, the diseases of repletion are far more numerous then those of emtiness, so the mind is oftner vitiated by affluence and prosperity, then by indigence and adversity. It becomes therefore those who are so surrounded with enemies to fortifie themselves and that they can no way do, but by a sincere Piety, that *whole Armor of God* which the Apostle describes, *Eph. 6. 13. by which alone they may repel all the darts of temptations*; nay not only ward the blow, but wrest the weapon out of Satans hand, so that when he urges to them the opportunities, the impunity which their wealth and greatness gives them to be bad, they may retort his Argument, and by a wholsomer inference collect thence their great obligation to be good, and that not only upon the score of gratitude (tho that were enough to an ingenious soul) but in the second place of interest also, in respect of that account they must finally give. For tho God be not an unjust exactor to reap where he has not sowed. yet he is not so negligently profuse, as to do that which no prudent man will do, scatter his goods promiscuously, without taking notice where they fall; but as he dispences all things by particular providence, so he does it to a particular end, and will exact as particular an account how that end has bin complied with.

10. It is a smart exprobaton of Gods to *Israel*, *Ezek.* 16. 17, 18, 19. that she had sacrilegiously employed his *silver* and *gold*, his *oil*, his *flower* and *bony* which he had given her in the service of her *Idols* by which as we may see he takes notice how we dispose of our temporal possessions, so it shews us how the enditement will proceed against all those who so pervert their use: with what confusion must they appear at the great Audit who can give no other account of their receipts, but that they consumed them upon their lusts, waged war against God with his own treasure, and bin as well thieves as rebels? What a Luciferian fall will they have from their honors, who have endeavoured to undermine Gods? thought themselves too great to pay him homage, and by their prophane and vicious example, induced a contempt of him? In short what a retaliation of inventions will there then be? those that have turned Gods grace into wantonness, converted his bounty into the fuel of their pride and luxury, shall then have their glory turn'd into shame, their riots and excesses into the want of a drop of water, and shall retain nothing of their greatness, but the guilt, the grating remembrance of having abused those temporal blessings, which if well managed might have received them into everlasting habitations. How necessary then is it for all who have receiv'd so much upon account, to be often reflecting on it, examining what charges, the great owner has impos'd upon so ample an income? what God requires of them for whom he hath done so much? And this is particularly the business of Piety, which in all the formentioned respects, is as the usefullest, so the noblest accomplishment of greatness.

11. And such it hath bin accounted till this prophane Age of ours, which has removed all the boundaries of the former, revert even the instincts of nature, and will not leave us so much of Religion as had the very worst of Heathens. For how erroneous soever they were in the choice of their Deities, they alwayes honored and reverenc'd those they chose, committed most of their enormities in obedience not in affront to them: did not assign them votaries as *Feroboam* did his Priests of the meanest of the

the people, but thought themselves dignified by their service, and esteemed it an infamy not to be pious. But alas we now adays make other estimates, Religion is so abject so contemptible a thing, as is thought fit to influence none that are great either in parts or quality: and therefore tho' too many are willing to appropriate it to women, upon the first account, *as the Gospel is the foolishness of preaching*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. yet they make exceptions upon the latter, and are not willing to afford it any the nobler Profelites even of that Sex.

12. I doubt not there are many Lectures read to such, to fortifie them against all impressions of piety, to raise out the common notion of a God, and in order to that to dispossess his Vicegerent within them, discard their conscience, that unmannerly inmate, which is still speaking what they have no mind to hear, and will be apt sometimes to question their grand principle, and tell them they have souls. And truly 'tis no wonder if the abettors of Atheism take this course; for since they have no solid foundation of truth or reason, 'tis but necessary they support their Party by Authority; the countenance and applause of Great Persons, and God knows they have too much succeeded in the design. But, in the mean time, what security do they give for the truth of their pretensions? We know 'tis still required of those that will practice upon other peoples concerns, that they put in caution to secure the owner from damage. But alas, what gage can they give for a soul? Who can contrive a form of Indemnity where that is the thing hazarded?

13. 'Tis easy indeed for one of these Apostles of *Sathan*, to tell a Lady that she has nothing to do but to indulge to her pleasure; that 'tis the extremest folly to be frightened from a present enjoyment, by a fear of I know not what future smart; that God, and Sin, and Hell, are but names, certain Mormos and Bug-bears conjur'd up by Divines, to work upon her fear, and abuse her crudelity. This, and much more of this kind may be said, and I doubt often is; but all this while the question is begg'd, and a strong affirmation must pass for proof: for I defie all the Doctors of Atheism to make any demonstration of their

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Tenet; and yet, though they pretend to no Demonstration themselves, Religion must be condemned meerly for the want of it: that is for not making spiritual things liable to sense, for distinguishing between belief and science; which is indeed for doing the most reasonable thing in the world. *viz.* the remitting every object to the trial of its proper faculty: and they who suspect it upon that account, may by the same kind of Logic wrangle us out of all our senses, may persuade us we hear nothing because the eye discerns not sounds, that we tast not, because the ear understands not gusts and savors, and so on to the rest.

14. And yet this is the bottom of those Arguments which the great pretenders of reason make against Religion, and in the mean time have so little ingenuity as to exclaim on the light crudulity of fools and women, that they embrace the dictates of faith whilst at the same instant they exact a more implicit assent to their negative Articles, their no Religion. A strange magisterial confidence so to impose on this Age, what is so universally contradictory to all former and to the common verdict of mankind. For 'tis observable through all the successions of men, that there were never any society any collective body of Atheists; a single one perhaps might here and there be found (as we see sometimes monsters or mishapen births) but for the generality they had alwayes such instincts of a Piety, that they never thought they ran far enough from Atheism; but rather choose to multiply their Gods, to have too many then none at all: nay were apt to descend to the adoration of things below themselves, rather then to renounce the power above them. By which we may see that the notion of a God is the most indelible character of natural reason, and therefore whatever pretence our Atheists make to ratiocination and deep discourse, it is none of that primitive fundamental reason coetaneous with our humanity; but is indeed a reason fit only for those who own themselves like the beasts that perish.

15. But admit we could be more bountiful to them, and allow their opinion an equal probability with our Faith, yet even this could never justify any body in point of prudence, that should adhere to them. Common discretion teaches us that where two propositions have an equal appearance of truth, there is no rational inducement to prefer one before the other, till we have examined the other, till we have examined the consequences, and find something in the one which may over-poise and outweigh the contrary. Now in all things that concern practice, there are no motives so considerable, either to invite or avert, as advantage or danger.

16. Let us apply this to the present case, and examine the pretensions of the Atheist and the Christian in both respects. But first we are to remember, that both advantage and danger are to be viewed under a double notion, either as present or as future. The former is the Atheist's most proper subject, and indeed all that he can pertinently speak to, who professes himself only a man of this world. Here he will tell us that the disbelief of God and another life, is the great enfranchiser of mankind, sets us at liberty from that thralldom, those Bonds where with our superstitious fears had fetter'd us, that it supersedes all those nice and perplexing inquiries of lawful and unlawful, and reduces all our inquiries only to this one, how we shall most please our selves. The glutton need not put a knife to his throat, but is only to put an edge upon his Palate. The drunkard need not refrain his cups, but only take care that they be filled with the most delicious liquor. The wanton need not pull out his eyes, but only contrive to possess that which temts him to desire; and in a word none of our appetities need be restrain'd, but satisfied. And this uncontrol'd licentiousness, this brutish liberty, is the *summum bonum*: that supreme happiness which they propose to themselves, and to which they invite others.

17. On the other side the Christian is not without claim to a present advantage, tho' of a far differing nature. he is not so preposterous as to think it a preferment to sink below his kind; to aspire to an assimilation with men and animals, which is the utmost the former amounts to, but

he proposes to himself the satisfaction of a man ; those delights which may entertain his reason not his sense ; which consist in the rectitude of a well inform d mind. His Religion is the perfectest Scheme of Morality , and makes him a Philosopher without the help of the Schools , it teaches him the art of subduing his appetites , calming his passions , and in a word makes him Lord of himself ; and by that gives him all the pleasures which result from such a sovereignty. Nor is he totally void even of the pleasures of sense , which in many instances are g eater to him then to those that most court them. Temperance cooks his court-est diet to a greater gust , then all their studied mixtures ; chastity makes one lawful embrace more grateful to him , then all the nauseating variety of their unbounded lusts ; and contentment swells his mite into a talent . makes him richer then the *Indies* would do if he desired beyond them. Nor is it a contemtible benefit that his moderation gives him an immunity from those sensitive pains which oft bring up the rear of inordinate sensual pleasures. So that his condition even set in the worst light in th t very particular wherein the Atheist most triumphs over him , is not so deplorable as 'tis represented.

18. But if it were , he has pleasures that would infinitely overwhelm that smart , and that not only in his reason (as hath bin said before) but in his more sublimed diviner part , such irradiations from above , such antepasts of his future blise , such acquiescence in a calm and serene conscience , as is very cheaply bought with all he can suffer here. I know the profane laugh at these things as Chimera's and the illusions of a prepossessed fancy ; (and truly if they were so , they might yet come in balance with many of their pleasures which are as much owing to opinion and imagination :) but if we consider what supports they have given under the heaviest pressures , how they enabled the primitive Martyrs , not only to suffer , but even to court all that is formidable to humane nature , we cannot think that a meer phantastic imaginary joy could deceive the sense of such real , such acute torments. And tho in this great declination of zeal , there be perhaps few that can pretend to those higher degrees of spiritual raptures , yet cer-

certainly were the votes of all devout persons collected, they would all concur in this testimony, that even in the common offices of Piety, the ordinary discharge of a good conscience, there is an infinitely greater complacency, a higher gust and relish, then in all the pleasures of sense. But of this the most irrefragable witnesses are those who from great voluptuaries have turned devotes, and I dare appeal to their experience, whether of the two states is the most pleasant. I wish those who will not believe this on others words, would themselves make the trial, and till they do so they are notoriously unjust to pronounce that a fiction, of whose reality they refuse to make proof.

19. By what hath bin said, some estimate may be made which bids fearest (the Atheist or Christian) as to present temporal felicity: but alas what an allay, what a damp is it to felicity to say 'tis temporal, yet we may give it a term below that, and say 'tis momentary. For since our life is so, nothing that depends on that can be otherwise, and yet in this shallow bottom the irreligious embark their all. For, as to all future advantage, 'tis their principle to disclaim it, they discern *no reward for blameless souls*, *Wisd. 7. 22.* So that in this particular the Christian does not compare with, but triumph over them. *He knows that if his earthly house of this Tabernacle be dissolved, he hath a building of God; an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2 Cor. 5. 1.* That when he parts with his life, he does not resign his happiness, but shall receive it infinitely improved both in degree and duration. And now certainly 'tis visible enough which opinion proposes the fairer hopes, and consequently which (supposing but an equal probability of truth) is the most inviting.

20. But some spirits there are so ignoble, that the most glorious Prize cannot animate them; that like a swine, the muscles of whose eyes, they say, permit him not to look upwards, is not concerned in all the felicities above, but would at a venture resign his share in those, so he may securely enjoy his husk and druff. But yet even these who are incapable of the more generous resentments, may be apt enough to the more servile; and danger may fright, tho

tho glory cannot allure them. It concerns such therefore to compare the mischiefs which each Opinion threatens to their opposits, and from thence make an estimate which is safest to be chosen. And here let the Atheist himself cast up the account of the dangers consequent to Christianity, and it can all amount but to this, the deprivation (or rather moderation) of som present sensual pleasures, or the incurring of some present sensitive pains; the former in the daily exercise of Temperance, and mortification; the latter (more rarely and oftner in purpose than act) the suffering for righteousness sake. And both these the Christian ballances, nay out-weighs by two more important present hazards on the other side. To the former, he opposes the danger of being enslaved to the brutish part of a mans self, a thing so deplorable even in the judgment of humanity. That all Writers of Ethics have uniformly declared no servility to be so sordid and intollerable as that of the vicious man to his Passions and Lusts. To the latter he confronts the mischief of being a slave to every man else: for such he certainly is, whom the fear of Suffering can baffle out of any thing he thinks just and honest. For if all the men in the World could successively have the power to afflict him, they would also have to command and rule him; and what can be more abject, more below the Dignity of human nature, then to have a spirit always prepared for such a servitude? Besides, even the utmost Sufferings which Christianity can at any time require, is outvied daily by the effects of luxury and rage; and for one that has opportunity to be a Martyr for his God thousands become so to their Vices.

21. If from the present we look forward to future dangers, the Atheist must here be perfectly silent; he cannot say that the Christian after this life shall be in any worse estate than himself, since he concludes they shall both be the same nothing. But the Christian threatens him with a more dismal state, he allows him indeed a being, yea an eternal one; but it is only such as qualifies him for a misery as eternal; the worm that never dyes, the fire unquenchable, where all the excesses of his short pleasures shall be revenged with more excessive, endless Torments: his Senses which were here the only Organs of his felicity, shall then be

(though not the only) the very sensible mediums of his wretchedness; and that conscience which he here suspended from its office, shall then take out its arrears, and return all its stifled admonitions in perpetual horrors, and desperate upbraidings. I need not now sure ask on which side the greater danger lies.

22. To conclude, the result of all is, that the transitory pleasures of the Atheists are over poised even by the present satisfactions of the Pious. And the eternity of unbounded, unconceivable joys he expects hereafter, comes in *ex abundanti*. having nothing on the other side that offers at a competition with it. And at the very same rate of Proportion we have seen the dangers also are so, that we can easily compute the utmost mischief our Christianity can do us, if it should be false; but the damage of the other is inestimable, both for the penalty of loss and sense. I may now appeal to common prudence to judge of the vast inequality, and to pronounce, that sure their had need be some great evidence of truth on the Atheists side, to preponderate all these disadvantages. Indeed, nothing much below a demonstration can justify the choice of so dangerous Principles; I am sure an equal probability can never do it. where the danger is so unequal; and were the veriest Atheist consulted in a secular case of the like circumstances, he would certainly pronounce him a mad man that should make such an election. How desperate a phrensy then is it to do it, without so much as that equal probability: nay indeed, without any probability at all? And yet this madness sets up for the monopoly not of Wit only, but Reason too, and by confidence and clamour, seeks to run down those Arguments it can never confute.

23. I may be thought here to have made too long a digression from my proper Subject, but I cannot confess it so; for since my present business is to recommend Piety, I can no way do that so effectually as by shewing its consonancy to right reason, especially considering the busie industry is now used to represent it under another form, and to alienate from it those persons whose Greatness may give it any lustre or repute in the World; of which sort I suppose there are

are few more frequently attacked than Women of Quality, that converse among those who call themselves the wits of the Age : who living in so infectious an Air, had need of some Antidotes about them ; and if what I have now offered, appear not forcible enough, (for it pretends not to the title of what may be said on the Subject) yet it may at least do them this service, to put them in mind of what they need, and send them to the fuller dispensatories of others.

24. And that is the thing I should earnestly beg of them, that they would be so just to their own Interest, as not to combine with seducers against themselves ; but if they have been so unhappy as to lend one ear to them yet at least not to give up both to be forced in a slavish submission to their dictates, but hear what may be said on the other side. And sure tis but a low composition for God thus to divide with *Sathan*, yet tis that of which his Emisseries are so jealous that tis one of their grand Maxims, that none who professes Divinity is to be advised with : and therefore by all Arts they are to be rendered either ridiculous or suspected ; to which methinks may be applied that Fable (which *Demosthenes* once recited to the *Athenians*, when *Alexander* demanded of them to deliver up their Orators) of the Wolves and the Sheep, who coming to a Treaty, the first Article of the Wolves was, that the Sheep should give up their mastives which guarded them : the resemblance is too obvious to need a minute application.

25. But this is manifestly to reverse all former Rules, and to trust a man rather in any Faculty than his own, and would never have prevailed in any thing but where the soul is concerned that poor despicable thing whereon alone we think fit to make experiments. 'Tis sure, that if any should dispute their Title to an earthly Possession, they would not so tamely resign it, nor would trust their own selves in its defence, but would consult their ablest Lawyers, and, by them, sift out every Circumstance that might establish their claim. Why should they then suffer themselves to be talk'd out of an Heavenly inheritance,

without so much as once proposing their doubts to those whose study and profession it is to resolve them? But as in all other ills, so in this, prevention is better than Cure; and therefore to those that are yet untainted, the securest course will be to stop both ears against all prophane insinuations. And to use those who tempt them to be disloyal to their God, that spiritual adultery, as they should do those who solicit them to the carnal, not so much as to enter partly, but with the greatest indignation detest and reject them. Tis the saying of the Wise man, *Prov. 25. 23.* that *an angry countenance driveth away a back-biting Tongue.* And certainly would great persons look severely on such defamers of Religion, they would give som check to that impudence of prophaneness which has given it such a vogue in the World.

26. And sure this is much their duty to do, if they own any Relation to that God who is so dishonoured. They would think it a very disingenious thing to sit by to hear a Friend or Benefactor reviled, and express no displeasure: and is God so friendless among them, that only his Traducers and Blasphemers can be patiently heard? Among the Jews, at the hearing of any Blasphemy, they rent their Clothes; but I fear we have som of our nice Dames that would be much more concerned at a rip in their garment, than at the rending and violating Gods sacred Name; and could more patiently behold the total subversion of Religion, than the disorder or misplacing of a Lock or Riband. But 'tis to be hoped there are not many so impious, and those that are not, will surely think themselves obliged with all their power, to discountenance all the Fautors of irreligion, whether they be the solemn sedater sort that would argue, or the jollier that would rally them out of their Faith.

27. But when they have thus provided against the assaults of others and secured the speculative part of Religion, they have only established a Judicatory against themselves, stored up matter of Conviction and Accusation, if they answer it not in the practic. I must therefore after this long excursion, return to my first point, and beseech them seriously to weigh the Obligations they have to Piety in the
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general notion of it, as it comprehends all the duties of a Christian life ; of which as I intend not to speak particularly ; so I know not where to find a better summary, then that which S. Fa. has draw up, *Chap 1. ver. 27, Pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

28. But besides this general, there is (as I said before) another more restrained notion of Piety, as it relates to our more immediate intercourse with God in divine Ordinances and worship, in which respect it commonly passes under the name of Devotion, and thus consider'd it has a great Propriety to the female Sex. For devotion, is a tender Plant that will scarce root in stiff or rocky ground, but requires a supple gentle soil, and therefore the feminine softness and pliability is very apt and proper for it. And accordingly there have been very eminent growths of it in that Sex. I need not heap up examples of former Ages, but rather perswade this to leave some at the least to the following ; and the more considerable the persons are the more conspicuous will be the example which seems the more to adapt it to those I now speak to, Devotion in a Cloister is as recluse as the Votary, a light rather under a bushel then on a candlestick : and in an obscure Cottage 'tis either not observed, or else thought to be but the effect of destitution, and secular wants, a reserve rather then a choice : but when those who are in the eye of the World, the most eminent Actors on the Theater of human life, shall chuse the part of a Saint, when those who want none of the diversions or blandishments of earth, shall have their conversation in Heaven, this recommends it to the Spectators as the true and greatest object of human choice ; since 'tis chosen by those who know the utmost pretence of all its competitors.

29. Nor is devotion only more excellent in them in regard of its effects, but 'tis also more necessary in respect of their obligation. Devotion is an abstraction from the world, and therefore cannot in any eminent degrees, be practiced by those whose necessities or business do much entangle them in it. So that from such a far less proportion

on will be accepted, then from those whose plenty and ease give them no other want but that of Employment. And certainly if there be any of whom that can truly be said : woemen of quallity are the persons : for they in this respect exceed even men of the likerank, for the men are often engaged in publick Employments, and must lend most of their time to the use of others : or however all have the care of their own private affairs, the managery of their fortunes to employ them. But of Women the utmost that is ordinarily required, is but a little easie inspection within their own Walls, the oversight of a few Children, and servants, and even from this how many are by their condition of life exempted ? and how many more do by their niceness and delicacy exempt themselves ? And surely so perfect a vacancy is neither happy nor safe. And therefore God who projects we should be both, never design'd it for any of mankind : but where he gives so much liberty from secular, he expects a greater diligence in spiritual employments.

30. And indeed 'tis an amazing thing to see, that any into whom he has breathed the breath of life, or whom he has stamped the image of his own eternity, can think those immortal Souls were given them only to serve the mean and abject uses of their corruptible bodies, (for which the soul of the dullest Animal would have done as well ;) that eating and drinking, sleep and recreations, which are only useful to the supporting us in this world, are the only things for which we were sent hither. And yet if we may measure their opinions by their practice, this seems to be the persuasion of many of our female Gentry, who look upon it as a degrading, a kind of Attainder of their blood, to do any thing but please their senses. An error sure of the most pernicious consequence imaginable. We know a Lady of pleasure is in one sense a very scandalous Epithet, and truly 'tis no very laudable one in the other way which is worse, they are often coincident, and fall in with each other. She whose sole universal aim is pleasure, will not think her self much out of her road, in the pursuit of any particular. And she that thinks she lives for no other purpose, will so often be at loss, for innocent pleasure, that she is almost under a necessity

ty to call in the nocent, to serve the very end (as the supposes) of her being. But indeed were they sure to confine themselves to such as are harmless in their kind, yet the excess of them renders them sinful, and the doting pursuit denominates them *lovers of Plesure, more than lovers of God*, a character so black that the Apostle compleats his Catalogue of the worst vices, of the worst times with it, 1 Tim. 3.4.

31. It is therefore the great goodness of God to design a rescue for those whose condition exposes them to that danger, and by exacting a liberal expence of time in their devotion, divert them from lavishing both it and their souls together. Neither does he by this defeat their aim of a pleasant life, but rather assist it: for whereas sensual delights are vagrant, and must be chased through a hundred turnings and wild Mazes, the spiritual are fixt, and one may always know where to find them. How often are the voluptuous in pain to know which plesure to chuse? like a surfeited stomach the greater variety is set before it, the more it nauseates all. What difficulties hath a Lady many times to resolve whether an Afternoon shall be spent at the Court, or at the Theater; whether in dancing or at Cards, in giving or receiving visits, as not knowing which will best please her? But she that knows the delights of Devotion, knows withal that there is no other fit to come in competition with it; and so is not distracted in her choice. nor need go farther then her Closet for the most agreeable entertainment. I know this will sound a little incredible to those that know no other use of Closets then as a Conservatory of Gauds and Baubles, that aspire to no plesure there above that of Children, the playing with the Pictures and Popets that adorn it. Nor indeed do I pretend that such shall find those satisfactions I speak of. Those whose errand is to *Beelzebub* the God of Flyes, must not expect to be treated by the God of *Israel*. An ingenuous man will scorn to obtrude himself on those who desire not his company, and sure God will not make himself mere cheap. Those that will meet him in their Closets, must come with that Design, resort thither as to an Oratory; nay more then so, they must come frequently, Spiritual Joys know not the way to a

place where they are not often invited : and as men seek for each other not in places where they seldom or never come, but where they daily frequent ; so God contrives, not to meet us in that place where we appear rarely and accidentally, but where we usually resort.

32. I shall not need to branch out devotion into the several parts, that being done already in a multitude of other Treatises of which if they please to consult any one, they cannot want a directory for their worship, whether private or publick. Only let me observe the order and connexion of these two, that they are neither to be served, nor yet to be ranged preposterously. The private must not juggle out the publick, for God expects his solemn homage : and their huddling it up in private as it may give men Ground to suspect they pay none at all ; so neither God nor man can collect any thing better from it, then that they are ashamed of the Deity they pretend to serve. On the other side the publick must as little swallow up the private, and where it does, there may be a just doubt of its sincerity. many attractives there may be to Church besides that of Piety, and indeed where that is really the motive, it teaches so much reverence to that awful presence they are to approach, as not to come without some preparation. What solicitude, what critical niceness will a Lady have for her dress, when she is to appear at a solemn meeting at Court, and shall she take no care how fordidly, how undecently she appears when the King of Kings gives audience ? Shall many hours, days, nay perhaps weeks, be taken up in contriving for the one, and shall there never be a minute allotted for the other ? This were sure very unequal, and yet this is the case where the devotion of the Closet do's not prepare for that of the Church. If the mind be not tuned first there, it will be very ill qualified for that harmony of souls, which is the only thing God regards in our publick offices. So that were there no other use of private devotion, but as it relates to the publick, that were enough to speak the necessity of it.

33. But indeed 'tis not only a needful preparative to that sacred commerce, but to our civil. The World is but a larger sort of Pethouse, in every corner of it we meet
with

with infectious airs, and those that converse in it had need of this Antidote. How many temptations does every place, every hour, every interview, present to the shocking even of that moral integrity which a sober Heathen would judge fit to preserve; much more of that strict Piety our Christianity exacts.

34. 'Twas the observation that *Origen* made of himself, that the day in which he so shamefully fell by sacrificing to Idols, he had ventured out in the morning before he had completed his usual Prayers; the Devil finding him so unarmed took advantage to assault him, as knowing he had then but a single impotent man to wrestle with, who had forfeited by not invoking, the protection of God. And indeed since prayer is the most powerful exorcism to eject him, we may well conclude the omission of it is a likely means to invite him: for if God have not the prepossession, if we do not by hearty Prayer surrender our souls to him in the morning, they are then all the day after like that empty house mentioned in the Gospel, a fit receptacle for as many evil spirits as please to inhabit there. Nor are these Spiritual the only dangers that attend us, we are liable to a multitude of secular ones also: our persons, our fortunes, our reputations, every thing wherein we can receive a benefit; renders us equally capable of a prejudice. What multitudes of accidents are there to which we lie open, and nothing to guard us from them but the divine Providence? which if we neglect to solicit we are sure very unworthy of its defence. And this is a consideration that methinks should bring even the most sensual persons upon their knees: for though too many may be found that despise the former danger, and can contentedly enough expose their souls, yet such are usually the most tender of their temporal concerns, it being commonly the excessive love of those which makes them neglect the other. She that fears not the fall into Sin, will yet fear the tumbling into a precipice, and though she care not for the spotting of her innocence, would be very loath any accident should blemish her face, disparage her fame, or impoverish her fortune, and yet from any or all of these she is utterly unable to guard her self, So that if Piety will not, yet interest me:

thinks should render her an homager to that omnipotent power, from whence alone she can derive her safety.

35. And now methinks a Duty that is thus bound on with the cords of a man, with human as well as divine persuasives, should not easily be shaken off. I wish I could say it never is, but I fear there are some of those I now speak to, who neglect it in spite of all these inducements; who though they can pretend nothing serious enough to own the name of business, do yet suffer a succession of I know not what impertinencies to divert them. And indeed were the expence of some Ladies daies calculated, we should find every hour so full of emptiness, so overladen with vanities that 'tis scarce imaginable where an office of Devotion should croud in.

36. The morning is divided between sleep and dressing, nor would the morning suffice, but that they are fain to make a new computation to measure it not by the Sun, but by their time of dining, which is often as late as the stationary hours of the Primitive Faste, though upon a far differing motive. The afternoons being by this means reduced, are too short for those many divertisements that await them, and must therefore borrow as much of the night as they lent to the morning. And when the meer fatigues of pleasure send a Lady to her rest, 'tis not imaginable that she will permit Devotion to induce a yet greater, and more disagreeable lassitude; so that the whole round of her time seems to be a kind of magic circle, wherein nothing that is holy must appear, and indeed 'tis none of the highest stratagems of *Sathan* thus to forestal their time; and by a perpetual supply of diversions; insensibly steal from them the opportunities of divine offices; an artifice by which I presume he prevails on some, who would startle at his grosser and more apparent temptations.

37. Nor needs he more then the success of this project; for if this habitual neglect of Piety should not finally end in great and criminal commissions, (as 'tis naturally very apt to do) yet his interest is sufficiently secured by such a customary omission, which amounts to no less then the living *without God in the world*: a state so hopeless, that when the Apostle recollects to the Ephesians wretchedness of their

Gentile

Gentile State, he does it in those very words, *Eph. 2. 12.* And sure, those that live so under Christianity, are not in a better, but worse condition, by how much contempt of God is more unpardonable than ignorance.

38. It therefore infinitely concerns those who are in danger of so fatal a snare, to look about them, and endeavor to countermines *Satan*, and be as industrious to secure their duty, as he is to supplant it; and to this purpose, one of the usefulest expedients I know, is to be beforehand with him; I mean, to make their Devotions the first business of the day; by which I intend not only those Ejaculations wherewith we all should open our eyes, but their more set and solemn Prayers; a Practice so highly expedient to the persons fore-mentioned, that it falls little short of necessary; and that upon several reasons.

39. First, in relation to one of the great ends of Morning Prayer, which is to supplicate the guidance and protection of God for the whole day. Now if this be not done till some Ladies Dressings be finished, 'twill be half a mockery, a most preposterous request, as to the greatest part of the day, which will be past before; and besides absurdity, there is danger in it; for all the preceding time is as it were outlawed by it, put from under the Divine Protection. Alas, are God's safeguards to be only meridional, to shine out only with the noon day Sun; Do they suppose *Satan* keeps their hours, and stirs not abroad till the afternoon; that there is no danger either of corporal or spiritual mischiefs before that time of the day? Certainly, if the noise of the harp and the viol which *Isa.* mentions, Chap. 5. 12. do not drown it; they may often hear a morning as well as evening Passing-bell; with how many others does the glass of life run out, whilst they are at their looking glasses? How many bodies are maimed and wounded in the time they are trimming and decking theirs? And who made them differ from others, 1 Cor. 4. 7? Or what tenure have they in the safety of one moment, save what they owe to God's Providence? And what rational expectation can they have of that, when they do not invoke it?

40. Nor are the spiritual dangers less, but rather much more; and they must be very slight observers of themselves, if they do not discern that snares may be laid for them in their recesses in their chambers as well as in places of the most publick resort. Indeed, were there no other then what relates to their dress, and curiosity thereof, it were enough to evidence their danger; scarce any part of that but carrying a temptation in it: to Pride, if it hit right, and please their fancy, to Anger and Vexation, if it do not. They had need therefore to put on their armour before their ornaments, by a prepossession of Prayer and Meditation to secure their vitals, lest by an internal death of Grace, their bodies (in their utmost luster) prove but the painted Sepulchers of their Souls.

41. In the second place, this appears requisite in opposition to the indecency and incongruity of the contrary. How inverted and estimate do they make of things that postpone the interest of their souls, to the meanest member of their bodies, pay a super-errogating attendance to the one, before the other comes at all into their care. But what is yet worse, how vile a contumely is offered to the Majesty of God, who is used as they do their duning Creditors. pos'd off with an excuse of no leasur yet to speak with him; whilst in the mean time all the factors for their vanity can have ready access, and full audience. God must attend till their Tailor, their Shoemaker please to dismiss them, and at the best, can be allowed only to bring up the rear of a whole shole of Artificers.

42. But thirdly, 'tis very doubtful whether he shall obtain so much from them; for it may often happen that he shall be quite precluded: so numerous are the parts of a modish equipage, and so exact a symmetry is required in the whole, that 'tis the business of many hours to compleat it; when as 'twas said of the Roman Ladies, a counsel must be called about the placing of an hair that sits irregularly, when one thing after another shall be tried, and again rejected, as not exact, or not becoming; time all the while insensibly steals away, and though that will not stay for them, yet dinner doth, and then their bellies begin to murmur to pay any longer attendance on their backs, and claim the

the next turn ; and between these two Competitors, 'tis odds devotion will be quite excluded, or reduced only to a grace before meat (and well if that, considering how unfashionable even that is grown) in the mean time what a wretched improvidence is it, to reduce the one necessary business of the day to such uncertainties, nay almost to a certain disappointment.

43. Yet suppose this hazard were only imaginary, and a Lady were infallibly sure not to lose the time of her Prayers : yet in the fourth place, she will be likely by such preceding diversions to lose much of her zeal in them, so that if they be said at all, they will scarce be said in a due manner. There is alas such a repugnancy in our Nature to any thing spiritual, that we cannot close in an instant ; but as a benumbed, frozen body will need some rubbing and chafing before it can be fit for motion ; so our more frozen souls require some previous incitations before they can with any vigor exert themselves in Devotion. Now sure the dressing time (I mean such a dressing as we now suppose) is not very proper for such preparations. 'Tis, on the contrary, extream apt to indispose and unfit them ; for when the fancy is possess'd with so many little images of vanity, they will not easily be ejected. That angling faculty is, God knows, too apt to bring in even the remotest diversions ; but when it has such a stock ready at hand. how will it pour them in upon the mind, to the great allaying, if not utter extinguishing of Devotion.

44. When all these considerations are put together, 'twill sure appear wholesom counsel, that such persons should not trust so important a duty to so many casualties, but in the first place secure a time for that, repair to their Oratory before their dressing room, and by an early consecration of themselves to God, defeat *Satan's* claim, and discourage his attempts for the rest of the day. We know there is a natural efficacy in a good beginning, towards the producing a good ending : but in spiritual things the influence is yet greater, because it draws in Auxiliaries from above, and engages the yet farther assistances of Grace. Upon which account I am apt to believe, that where this Duty is sincerely and fervently performed in the morning, it will not totally

tally be neglected in the succeeding parts of the day. 'Twill be easy to discern the same obligation the same advantage of closing the day with God, that there was to begin it; and when those two boundaries are secured, when those are lookt upon as strict duty, and constantly observed; 'tis not unlikely but their Piety may grow generous, and with *David, Ps. 55. 17.* add to the *evening and morning a noon-day office*; for where Devotion is real, 'tis apt to be progressive; and the more we converse with God, the more we shall desire to do so. Thus we see how this little cloud like that of *Elijah, 1 King. 18. 44.* may overspread the *Heavens*, and this handful of first-fruits may hallow the whole day.

45. Nay indeed, when it has advanced thus far, 'twill probably go farther, 'twill not keep it self only on the defensive part, but invade its opposits, get daily ground of those vanities by which it was before oppress'd. For when a Lady has in her Closet wash't her cheeks with penitential tears, she cannot sure when she comes out think them prepared for the varnish of the paint and fucus. When she has attentively examined her Conscience, that impartial mirror, and there discern'd all the blemishes of her nobler part, she will sure with somewhat a more cold concern consult her looking-glass. And when she has by pious vows and resolutions put on the Lord Jesus Christ, *Rom. 13. 14.* 'twill be impossible for her to be very anxiously careful about her garments. This devout temper of her mind will by a holy *leger-demain* shuffte the Romances out of her hand and substitute the Oracles of Truth; will not let her dream away her time in phantastic scenes, and elaborate nothing but prompt her to give all diligence to make her Calling and Election sure. In a word, when she once understands what it is to spend one hour devoutly, she will endeavor to rescue all the rest from trifles, and impertinent entertainments and employ them to purposes more worthy the great end of her being. Thus may she almost insensibly wind her self out of the snare, disintangle her self from those temptations wherewith she was enwrapt; and by having her heart so set at liberty, may run the ways of God's Commandments. *Pf. 119.*

46. But privat Devotion, tho of excellent effect, cannot commute for the omission of public, nor indeed can it long maintain its vigor, unless sometimes cherished by the warmth of Christian Assemblies; and if God please to visit them in their Closets, they are (even by their own Laws of Civility) obliged to return his Visits, and attend him in his house, I fear too many adapt the instance in the formality too, and come as unconcernedly to him as they do to one another. 'Tis true, those that pay him a cordial reverence at Home, will certainly do it at Church; and therefore by the little we see performed by some there, we may doubt God sees as little in their Retirements. But what speak I of an hearty Reverence, when 'tis visible that there are those who pay none at all? How rare a sight is it for some Ladies to appear at Church? How many times (I had almost said hundreds) do we see their Coaches stand at the Play-house, for once at God's? They seem to own no distinction of days, unless it be, that Sunday is their most vacant season to take Physic, or to lie a-bed; and if such do ever come to Church, Devotion is like to be the least part of their errand; some new garment perhaps or dress is to be shew'd, and that though the place where the most critical Judges of those things will be most at leisure to observe them; or if they come not to teach new fashions, it may be they come to learn; and such documents will be surer to be put in practice then any in the Sermon. Possibly they expect to see some friend or acquaintance there, and as if Christ were to be served (as he was born) in an Inn, make his house the common rendezvous in which to meet their Associates. If they have any more ingenions attractives, 'tis commonly that of curiosity, to hear some new celebrated Preacher, and that rather for his Rhetoric then his Divinity; and this Motive (tho the best of the set) is but like that which prevail'd with those Jews St. John mentions, who came to Jesus that they might see Lazarus, Joh. 12.

47. I shall not rank among these Motives, that of Hipocrisie and seeming Holiness; for from that all the rest do acquit them. Indeed 'tis the only sin which this Age has seemed to reform, and that too

too only by way of *Antiphrasis*, not by the Vertue but the Iniquity of the Times. Religion is grown so unfashionable, so contemptible; that none can now be tempted to put on so ridiculous a disguise. And although as to single persons I confess Hypocrisie one of the deepest Guilts, such as has a peculiar portion assigned it by Christ in the place of torment, *Mat. 24. 51.* yet as to Communities, I cannot but think it better to have a face of Religion then profaneness. The example of the former may work beyond it self, and the form of Godliness in some may produce the power of it in others; but a pattern of profaneness, the farther it operates the worse, and all the progress it can make, is from one wickedness to another, so that I fear as St. *Bernard* wilht for his Feaver again, so the Church may ere long for her Hypocrites.

48. But to recal my self from this digression, let us a little enquire how those whom the forementioned Motives bring to Church behave themselves there, and that is indeed with great conformity to the ends of their coming, their errand is not to be Suppliants, neither do they put themselves in the posture, kneeling is impertinent for them who mean not to pray, but as the Apostle describes the Idolatrous service of the Israelites, *They sate down to eat and drink and rose up to play*; so these sit down to talk and laugh with their Pew-fellows, and rise up to gape and look about them. When they should be confessing their sins to Almighty God they are apologizing (perhaps) to one another for the omission of a ceremonious visit, or some other breach of civility; when they should be *observing the goings of God in the Sanctuary*, *Psa. 68.* they are inquiring when this Lady came to Town, or when that goes out; nay perhaps the Theater is brought into the Temple, the last play they saw is recollected, and Quotations enough brought thence to vie with the Preacher. 'Tis impossible to reckon up all their Topics of discourse, nay it were indeed scandalous for one that reproves them to pretend to know, by how many Impertinencies (to say no worse) they profane that Holy Place and time.

49. But that All-seeing Eye in whose presence they are, keeps an exact account, and will charge them not only with the

the principle but the product; not only with their own irreverences, but with those which by their example or encouragement they have occasion'd in others, nay farther even with that scandal which redounds to Christianity by it. For when one that is to chuse a Religion shall read the Precepts of *Pythagoras* enjoining that the Gods must not be worship'd in passing by, as it were accidentally, but with the greatest solemnity and intention, when they shall consider the care of *Numa* in instituting Officers, who at Sacrifices, and all Divine Services, should call upon the people to keep silence and advert to Devotion, or but the practice of the present *Makometans*, who permit none to sit in their *Moschos* nor to pray without prostration. when I say this is considered, and compared with the scandalous indecency observable in our Churches, he will certainly exclude Christianity from all competition in his choise, not allow that the name of a Religion, whose very worship appears so profane, and whose Votaries mock the God they pretend to serve

50. Yet how severe soever the charge may lie against some, I am far from including all under it. I know there are many Ladies whose examples are reproaches to the other Sex that help to fill our congregations when Gentlemen desert them, and to who sometimes we alone own that our Churches are not furnished like the Feast in the Parable, *Luke 14. 21.* meerly out of the *high waies and hedges, with the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind*; yet some even of these may be liable to some irregularity, which may be the effects of inadvertency or misperswasion, though not of contempt or prophaneness.

51. And first 'tis observable in some who come constantly, that yet they come not early, so that a considerable part of Prayers is past ere they enter the Church. This first causes some disturbance to others, the successive entry of new comers keeping the Congregation in a continual motion and agitation, which how unagreeable it is to Devotion, *Numa* a Heathen Prince may teach us, who *Plutarch* tells us took a particular care, that in the time of Divine Worship, no knocking, clapping, or other noise should be heard; as well knowing how much the operati-

ons of the intellect are obstructed by any thing that importunes the Senses. What would he have said, should he come into one of our City Congregations, where often during the whole time of Prayer, the clapping of pew-doors does out-noise the Reader.

52. But besides the indecency of the thing, and the interruption it gives to others, 'tis very injurious to themselves; a kind of partial excommunication of their own inflicting; which excludes them from part of the the divine Offices, and from that part too, which is of the most universal concern, I mean the confession of sins, which the wisdom of our Church has fitly placed in the beginning of her Service, as the necessary introduction to all the rest. For considering how obnoxious we all are to the wrath and vengeance of God, our first business is to deprecate that by an humble confession of our guilt. Would any Malefactor that hath forfeited his life to Justice, come boldly to his Prince, and without taking notice of his crimes, importune him to bestow the greatest favors and dignities upon him? Yet 'tis the very same abrupt impudence in us, to supplicate the divine Majesty before we attempt to atone him; to ask good things from him before we have acknowledged the ill we have done against him. And to such God may justly make such a return as *Augustus* did to one that entertained him much below his greatness, I knew not before that we were such familiars.

53. It will much better become them to anticipate the time, to wait at the posts of his doors, Pro 8. and contrive to be there before the Service begins, that so by previous recollection they may put their minds in a fit posture of address at the public Audience: which (by the way) speaks it to be no very laudable custom which almost universally prevails, that those few who do come early, spend the interval before service, in talking with one another, by which they do not only lose the advantage of that time for preparation, but convert it into the direct contrary, do thereby actually unfit and indispose themselves. God knows our hearts even in their most composed temper, are too apt to create diversions; we need not flatter game for them to chase, and by prefacing our Prayer with secular discourse

make

make a gap for the same thoughts to return upon us in them. Besides in relation to the place, it has a spice of profaneness, 'tis the bringing the Moabite and Ammonite into the Temple, *Deut.* 23. 3. a kind of invasion on God's propriety, by introducing our worldly concerns or diversions into the house which is called by his name, solemnly dedicated to him, and therefore dedicated that it might be his peculiar. So that with a little variation, we may to such apply the expository reproof of the Apostle to the Corinthians, *1 Cor.* 11. 22. *what, have ye not houses to talk and converse in, or despise ye the Church of God?* But this is I confess a reproof that will not reach to many, there being so few of the better sort that come early enough to talk before Service, and as for those who talk at it, we have already rankt them under another *Classis*. Yet give me leave to add that those fall not much short of that degree of profaneness, who come late only because they are loth to rise, or to abate any thing of the curiosity of their dress. For she that prefers her sloth or her vanity before Gods Service, is like (how decently soever she behave her self) to give but an insignificant attendance at it.

54. But I guess this may in many proceed from another cause, which tho less ill in their intention, is not so in respect either of its unreasonableness or its effects, and that is an unequal estimate they make of the parts of Gods Service. This last Age has brought in such a partiality for Preaching, that Prayer seems comparatively (like *Sarah* to *Hagar*) despicable in their eyes: so that if they can but come time enough to the Sermon, they think they have discharged the weightier part of the Law, and of their own duty. This mis-perswasion, tho it have too generally diffused it self through both Sexes, yet seems to have bin very especially imbibed by the female. And besides the evidence that Sunday gives; the week-dayes afford no less. Let there be a Lecture tho at the remotest part of the Town, what hurrying is there to it, but let the Bell tole never so loud for the Canonical hours of Common-Prayer: 'twill not call the nearest of the Neighborhood. I speak not of those who are at defiance with our Service, and have listed themselves in separate Congregations (for I intend not to trace

trace them through their wild mazes) but of those who yet own our Church, and object not to its Offices, but only have suffered their value for them to be insensibly undermined by their great zeal for Preaching. God sure intends a Harmony in all sacred Ordinances, and would not have set up a party against another, but mutually assist each others operation upon us: thus Prayer disposes us to receive benefit by preaching, and preaching teaches us how to pray aright, and God grant we may long enjoy the publick opportunities of both. Yet since this Age has brought them to a competition, I must take leave to say, that if we come impartially to weigh Prayer and Preaching, the Ballance will incline another way then it seems with many to do, and we shall find Prayer the more essential part of Religion.

55. The end of Preaching is twofold, either to teach us what we know not, or to excite us to practice what we already know: now in relation to the first of these ends, I suppose there is a wide difference between Preaching at the first promulgation of the Gospel, and now: 'twas then the only way of revealing to the World the whole mystery of our Salvation, so that the Apostles inference was then irrefragable: *how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a Preacher?* Ro. 10. 14. But where Christianity is planted, and the New Testament received, we have therein the whole doctrine of Christ; nay we have not only the matter but the very form of many of those Sermons which Christ and his Apostles preached; so that unless we think them not sufficiently gifted: We cannot but acknowledg, we have in them ample Instruction both for Faith and Manners; enough as the Apostle speaks, *to make us wise unto Salvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And the reading of those being a considerable part of our Churches Service, we have the most genuine Preaching even before the Minister ascends the Pulpit. Besides, for the help of those whose youth or incapacity disables them from making collections thence for themselves, our Church has epitomiz'd the most necessary Points of Belief and Practice in the Catechism, not (as the Roman) to preclude their farther search, but to supply them in the interim till they

they are qualified for it; and by that early infusion of Christian Principles, to secure them of that knowledg which is simply necessary to their Salvation.

56. Now sure, to people in this state, Preaching is not of so absolute necessity in respect of instruction, as it was to those who from Heathenism and Idolatry were to be brought first to the Knowledg, and then to the Faith of Christ. We seem therefore now more generally concern'd in the other end of Preaching, the exciting us to Practice; for alas, there are few of us who stumble on sin for want of light, but either through heedlessness, and want of looking before us, or else by a wilful prostration of our selves to it; so that we often need to be roused out of our negligence, to be frighted out of our stubbornness, and by a close application of those truths we either forget or suppress, be animated to our Duty. And for this purpose Preaching is doubtless of excellent use, and the nauseating of it shews a very sick constitution of mind; yet sure the over greedy desire may be a Disease also. He that eats more than he can concoct, does not so much assist as oppress nature, and those that run from Sermon to Sermon, that allow themselves no time to chew, much less to digest what they hear, will sooner confound their brains then better their lives. Nay, it oft betraies them to a very pernicious delusion; it diverts them from many of the practical parts of Piety. and yet gives them a confidence that they are extraordinarily Pious; and by their belief that Religion consists principally in hearing, makes them forget to try themselves by that more infallible test of doing God's will. So that whereas God never designed Preaching for more then a guide in their way, they make it their way, and their end too; and Hearing must, like a circle, begin and terminate in it self.

57. I am sure in secular concerns, we should think him a very unprofitable servant, that after his Lord had given him directions what to do, should be so transported with hearing his instructions, that he should desire to have it infinitely repeated, and so spend the time wherein he should do the work. And we have reason to think God will make the same judgment of those who do the like in his service.

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58. One would now think that this ravenous appetite of hearing should supersede all niceness in it, yet we find it does not, but that some make a shift to be at once voracious and squeamish. If this spiritual food be not artificially dressed, 'tis too gross for their palates; the phrase must be elegant, the words well accented, and the *enticing words of Mans Wisdom* which St. Paul disclaims in his Preaching, 1 Cor. 2. 4. is that which they principally regard. Nay the memory of the Preacher becomes the most material point of his Sermon, and the first glance on his Book prejudices him. I need not add the extravagances of an uncouth tone, a furious vehemence, or phantastic gesture, wherein the Soul and vital efficacy of Preaching has been solemnly placed. Now 'tis evident all these are but trivial Accomplishments: so that those who insist so much on them, do make Preaching much less sacred and divine than indeed it is: and therefore cannot without absurdity lay the main stress of Religion upon it, or makes that the highest of Gods Ordinances, which owes all its gratefulness with them to the Endowments of men. Some may think I pursue this Subject too far, but I am sure I do it not with design to derogate from the just respect due to Preaching, only I would not have it monopolize our esteem or justify out another Duty, which is of more constant use, and indispensable necessity.

59. And such certainly is Prayer, that respiration of the soul, which is so necessary, that it admits not of long intermission, and therefore seems to carry the same proportion to hearing, which breathing does to eating: we may make long intervals of feeding, and yet subsist; but if we should do so in breathing, we cannot recover it. Prayer is the Morning and Evening Sacrifice under the Law, which God ordained should be perpetual; whereas Preaching is but like the Readings in the Synagogues on Sabbaths and Festivals, indeed, however we have confounded the terms, 'tis prayer only that can properly be called the worship of God; 'tis that by which we pay him his solemn homage, acknowledge his sovereignty, and our own dependance. When we hear, we do no more than what every Disciple does to his Master; but when we pray, we own him as the Spring and source of all the good we expect, as the Author of our Being, and

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the Object of our Adoration, in a word, we do by it profess him our God; it being an impress of meer natural Religion to supplicate the Deity we acknowledg.

60. And as by Prayer we render the greatest Honour to God, so likewise do we procure the greatest advantages to our selves. Prayer is the powerful Engin, by which we draw down Blessings; tis the Key which lets us into the immense Storehouse of the Almighty; nay, tis that upon which the efficacy of Preaching depends. The word is but a dead Letter without the Spirit; and that has promised the Spirit to none but those God ask it, *Luke 11.13*. So that Prayer is that which enlivens and inspirits our most sacred actions: and accordingly in Scripture we find it still a concomitant in all Ecclesiastical concerns. When an Apostle was to be substituted in the room of *Judas*, we find they referred it not to the decision of Lots, till God, who had the sole disposing of them, *Prov. 16.33*, had been invoked by solemn Prayer, *Act. 1.24*. So when *Barnabas* and *Saul* were to be separated to the Ministry, tho the appointment were by the Holy Ghost, yet that superseded not the necessity of Prayer; the Apostles prayed (yea, and fasted too) before they laid their hand on them, *Act. 13.3*. Nay, our Blessed Saviour himself, though he knew what was in Man, and needed no guidance but his own Omniscience in this choice, yet we find that before his Election of the twelve Apostles, he continued a whole night in Prayer to God, *Luke 6.22*. doubtless, to teach us how requisite Prayer is in all our important interests, which like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire to the Israelites, is our best convoy through the Wilderness, through all the snares and temptations, through all the Calamities and Distresses of this World, and our most infallible Guide to the Land of Promise.

61. And sure when all these are the properties of Prayer, though private, they will not less belong to the publick, such a conspiracy and union of importunate Devotion, must have a proportionable increase in its effect; and if Heaven can suffer violence by the fervor of one single Votary, with what storm, what batteries will it be scaled by a numerous Congregation?

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We find the Church is by Christ, compared to an Army with banners, Cant. 6. 3. but sure never is this Army in so good array, in so invincible a posture as upon its knees. The Ecclesiastical story tells us of a Legion of Christians in *Aurelius's* Camp, who in that posture discomfited two assailants at once, the enemy and the drought; that breath which they sent up in Prayers, like a kindly exhalation returned in rain, and relieved the perishing Army: and had we but the same fervor, and the same innocency, could we lift up but as pure hands as they did, there would be no Blessing beyond our reach. But the less any of us find our selves so qualified, the more need we have to put our selves among those that are.

62. There is an happy contagion in goodness; like green wood, we may perhaps be kindled by the neighbouring flame; the example of anothers zeal may awake mine. However there is some advantage in being in the company: those showers of benediction which their Prayers bring down, are so plentiful, that some drops at least may scatter upon those about them. We find *Elisha* for *Jebozaphab's* sake, endured the presence of *Jebozan*. whom otherwise he professes he would not have lookt towards, 2 King. 3. 14. and God may perhaps do the like in this case; and as he prospered *Potiphar* for *Joseph's* sake, Gen. 39. 23. so the Piety of some few may redound to the benefit of all. From all these considerations I suppose may sufficiently be evinced the necessity and benefit, of publick Prayer, and consequently the unreasonableness of those, who upon any pretence neglect it. I shall now only beseech those to whom I speak to make the application to themselves, and to shew they do so by their more early and more assiduous attendance on it.

63. There is also another Duty to which many of these to whom I write seem to need some incitation, and that is Communicating a part of Devotion which the looser sort scarce ever think in season till their death Beds, as if that Sacrament like the Romanists Extream Unction. were only fit for expiating Souls, but to such we may apply the words of the Angel to the Woman, Lu. 24. 5. *Why seek ye the living among the dead?* Why think ye that the Sun of Right-

Righteousness is only to shine in the shades of death, or that Christ is never to give us his flesh, till we are putting off our own; 'Tis one principal end of that Sacrament to engage and enable us to a new life; how preposterous then is it, how utterly inconsistent with that end to defer it to the hour of death. 'Tis true 'tis a good *Viaticum* for such as are in their way towards bliss, but it is too bold a hope, to fancy that it shall in an instant bring them into that way, who have their whole life posted on in the contrary: the roads to Heaven and Hell lie sure too far asunder to be within distance of one step, nor can it with any safety be presumed that once receiving at their death, shall expiate so many wilful neglects of it in their life.

64. But I shall suppose these total Omissions are not a common guilt: yet with many others the fault differs only in degree, they do not wholly omit, but yet come so infrequently as if they thought it a very arbitrary matter whether they come or no. And this truly is observable in many who seem to give good attendance on other parts of divine Worship, for indeed 'tis a sad spectacle to see, that let a Church be never so much crowded at Sermon, 'tis emptied in an instant when the Communion begins, people run as it were frightened from it, as if they thought with those in *Malachy*, that *the table of our Lord is polluted*, Mal. 1. 12. that some pest or infection would thence break forth upon them. A strange indignity to the Majesty, and ingratitude to the love of our Redeemer. Let a King, or but some great man make a public entertainment, how hard is it to keep back the pressing multitude: many Officers are necessary to repel the uninvited guests, and yet here there needs more to drive us to it, tho the Invitation be more general, and the Treat infinitely more magnificent.

65. I know this fault (like many other) shrouds it self under a fair disguise: and this barbarous neglect pretends to the humblest veneration. People say 'tis their great reverence they have for the Sacrament that keeps them at so great a distance; but sure that is but a fictitious reverence which discards obedience; and when Christ commands our coming, our drawing back looks more like stubbornness and rebellion, then awe and respect. I suppose

we pretend not to exceed the Primitive Christians in humility and godly fear, and yet they communicated daily, and therefore sure our reverence is of a much differing make from theirs, if it produce such contrary effects. Indeed 'tis to be feared that many put a great cheat upon themselves in this matter. The Eucharist is justly accounted the highest of divine Ordinances, and those who think of no preparation in other, yet have some general impressions of the necessity of it in this; but the uneasiness of the task discourages them, they dare not come without a wedding garment, and yet are loth to be at the pains to put it on, so that all this goodly pretext of reverence, is but the Devil in *Samuels* Mantle, is but sloth clad in the habit of humility.

66. And to this temptation of sloth there is another thing very subservient, and that is the easie and slight opinion which is commonly taken of sins of Omission, many are startled at great Commissions think them to carry a face of deformity and horror, who in the mean time look on Omissions only as privations and meer nothings, as if all the affirmative Precepts were only things of form, put in by God rather to try our inclinations, then to oblige our performance; and so were rather overtures and proposals which we may assent to or not, then injunctions which at our peril we must obey. A fancy no less absurd then impious. That God should be content so to compound with his creatures (and like a Prince overpower'd by his vassals) consent to remit all their homage, absolve them from all positive Duty, so they would be but so civil as not to flie in his face, or to commit outrage on his Person. But this wild imagination needs no other confutation, then that form of inditement our Savior gives us as the Model of that which shall be used at the last day, *Mat. 23.* where the whole Process lies against sins of Omission, and yet the sentence is as dismal and irreversible, as if all the Commissions in the World had bin put into the Bill.

67 And certainly of all Omissions none is like to be more severely charged then this of communicating, which is not only a disobedience, but an unkindness, which strikes not only at the Authority but the Love of our Lord, when he all

So affects a union with us that he creates Myſteries only to effect it, when he deſcends even to our ſenſuality, and becauſe we want ſpiritual appetites, puts himſelf within reach of our natural; and as he once veil'd his Divinity in fleſh, ſo now veilſeven that fleſh under the form of our corporal nonriſhment, only that he may the more indifſolubly unite, yea incorporat himſelf with us. When I ſay he does all this, we are not only impious but inhuman if it will not attract us. Nay farther, when he does all this upon the moſt endearing memory of what he has before done for us, when he preſents himſelf to our imbraces in the ſame form wherein he preſented himſelf to God for our expiation, when he ſhews us thoſe wounds which our iniquities made, thoſe ſtripes by which we were healed, that death by which we are revived, ſhall we to compleat the Scene of his Paſſion, force him alſo to that pathetic complaint, *Lam. 1. 12. Have ye no regard all ye that paſs by?* Shall we inſtead of ſmiting our breſts (as did other wretchedneſſes of his ſufferings) turn our backs? If we can habitually do this, 'tis to be feared the next degree will be to wag our heads too, and we ſhall have the profaneneſs to deride, what we have not the Piety to commemorate.

68. And this ſeems to be no improbable fear, for in Religion there are gradual declinations as well as advances, coldneſs and tepidity will (if not ſtopt in its progreſs) quickly grow to lothing and contempt. And indeed to what can we more reaſonable impute the great overflowings of profaneneſs among us, then to our ill-huſbanding the means of Grace? Now certainly of all thoſe means there is none of greater energy and power then the bleſſed Sacrament.

69. Were there no other benefit derived from it ſave that which the preparation implies, 'twere very conſiderable. It brings us to a recollection, fixes our indefinite purpoſes of ſearching and trying our wayes, which elſe perhaps we ſhould infinitely defer, ſtops our career in ſin, and by acquainting us with our ſelves, ſhews us where our danger lies, and how we are to avert it, what breaches are made in upon our ſouls, and how we muſt repair them, all which are with many ſeldom thought of, but when

the time of communicating approaches. We live so far off from our selves, know so little what is done in us that we answer the description the Prophet makes of the surprize of *Babylon*, of which the King knew nothing till post after post run to inform him that his *City was taken at one end*, Jer. 51. 31. we often lie secure while the enemy is within our walls, and therefore they are friendly alarms which the Sacrament gives us to look to our defence. But if when the Trumpet sounds none will prepare himself to the Battle, if when the Minister gives warning of a Sacrament, and the preparation it requires. we go our wayes, and with *Gallio care for none of these things*, or with *Felix*, Acts 24. 25. put it off to a convenient time, we wilfully expose our selves, and 'tis but just Christ dreadful men should be executed upon us, that we die in our sins, who will frustrate such an opportunity of a rescue from them.

70. But 'tis not onely this remo'ter and accidental advantage (this preventing Grace) which the Holy Eucharist affords, it contains yet greater and more intrinsic benefits, is a Spring of assisting Grace also, 'tis a Magazine of Spiritual Artillery to fortifie us against all assaults of the Devil, the great Catholicon for all the M ladies of our Souls, that which if duly received, will qualifie us to make *St. Pauls* boast, *Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.* In a word 'tis to us whatever we need, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, because it possesses us of him who is so, 1 Cor. 1. 31. so that whenever we neglect it, we manifestly betray our own interest, and do implicitly choose death whilst we thus run from life.

71. Thus we see there is a concurrence of all sorts of Arguments for this Duty, oh that some (at least) of them may prevail; If we are not tractable enough to do it in obedience, yet let us be so ingenious as to do it for Love, for Gratitude, or if for neither of those, let us be at least so wise as to do it for interest, and advantage. I know people are apt to pretend business, the Farm and the Oxen must excuse their coming to the

Feast

Sect. V.

Of Piety.

91

feast, but alas what business can there be of equal necessity or advantage with this? Yet even that Apology is superadded to those I now speak to, who as I observed before have leisure more: then enough, so that it would be one part of the benefit, its taking up some of their time: let me therefore earnestly beseech them, not to grudge a few of their vacant hours to this so happy an employment.

72. Did any of their near Friends and Relations invite them to an interview, they would not think him too importunate, tho he repeated the summons weekly, nay, daily, but would punctually observe the meeting: And when their Savior much seldomer entreats their company, shall he not obtain it? must he never see them but at two or three solemn times of the year? and shall they wonder at any intervening invitation (as the Shunamites husband did at her going to the Prophet when it was *neither new Moon nor Sabbath*, 2 Kin. 4. 23.) and tell him 'tis not yet *Easter nor Christmas*, this were not only to be irreligious but rude; and methinks those who stand so much upon the particulars of Civility to one another, should not then only lay aside their good manners when they are to treat with their Redeemer. Certainly he is not so unpleasant company that they need shun his converse: if he do appear so to any, 'tis that shunning that is the cause of it. He does not open his treasures to strangers: they that come now and then for form sake, no wonder if their entertainment, be as cold as their address. They that would indeed *tast how sweet the Lord is*, Ps. 34. 8. must by the frequency of their coming shew the heartiness of it, and then they would indeed find it a *feast of fat things*, as the Prophet speaks.

73. In a word, let them but make experiment, resolve for a certain time (be it a year or thereabouts) to omit no opportunity, (and withall no due preparation) of communicating, I am a little confident they will afterwards need no other importunity but that of their own longings: the expiration of that definit time will prove the beginning of an indefinit, and their resolutions will have no other limit but their lives. For certainly there is not in all the whole mystery of Godliness, in all the Oeconomy

of the Gospel, so expedite, so infallible a means of growth in Grace, as a frequent and worthy participation of this blessed Sacrament; I cannot therefore more pertinently close this Section, then with this exhortation to it, by which they will not only compleat all their Devotions, crown and hallow the rest of their Oblations to God, but they will be advanced also in all parts of practical Piety: for tho this and other sacred Offices be perform'd in the Church, the efficacy of them is not circumscribed within those walls, but follows the devout soul through all the occurrences of human life.

74. She that has intently consider'd the presence of God in the Sanctuary, has learn'd so much of his ubiquity, that she will not easily forget it in other places, and she that remembers that will need no other guard to secure her innocence, no other incentive to animate her endeavors, since she is view'd by him who is equally powerful to punish or reward, who regards not the persons of the mighty, nor can be awed into the connivance of a crime. Indeed a serious advertence to the divine Presence, is the most certain curb to all disorderly appetites, as on the contrary the not having God before their eyes, is in Scripture the comprehensive description of the most wretched profligate state of sin. It concerns therefore all those who aspire to true Piety to nourish that awful sense in their hearts, as that which will best enable them to practice the Apostles advice, *2 Cor. 7. 1. To cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

75. I am sensible that this Section is spun out to a length very unproportionable to the former; but as the principal wheel in an artificial movement may be allowed a bulk somewhat answerable to its use, so upon the same account, the size of this is not unjustifiable; the Piety which this designs to recommend being the one necessary thing, which must influence all other endowments. We know the course resemblance Solomon makes of a fair woman without discretion, that she is like a jewel of gold in a swines snout, *Prov. 11. 12.* but even that discretion (if any such could be) without Piety were but the adding one jewel more,

more, exposing another valuable thing to the same despicable ridiculous use. But to speak truly there is no real discretion, where there is no Religion: and therefore Solomon seems in this place to understand by it that practical Wisdom, which in the sacred Dialect (his writings especially) is equivalent to the fear of the Lord. 'Tis true, there may be a rallying wit to scoff and abuse, a serpentine Wiliness to undermine and deceive, but that sort of Wisdom (like that of *Achitophel*) finally converts into foolishness, does very often appear to do so in this life, but most certainly in the next, because it builds upon a false bottom. prefers temporal things before eternal. And as neither beauty or wit (the two celebrated accomplishments of women) so will neither Greatness and Honor give any advantage without Piety, 'twill only (as hath bin already observed) make them more exemplary sinners, inflame the account, and so expose them to a greater degree of condemnation, for sure 'tis not their Sex that will rescue them from the dismal denunciation of the Wise man. *Wisd. 6. 6. Mighty men shall be mightily tormented*, I conclude all with another irrefragable maxim of the same Author, *Whether one be Rich, Noble, or Poor, their Glory is in the Fear of the Lord.*

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THE LADIES CALLING.

PART II. SECT. I.

Of Virgins.

1. **W**E have taken a view of those general qualifications, which are at once the duty and the ornament of the Female sex, consider'd at large. These like the common Genius involve all; but there are also specific differences, arising from the several circumstances and states of life, some whereof may exact greater degrees even of the former Vertues, and all may have some distinct and peculiar requisits adapted to that particular state and condition: and of these our proposed method engages us now to consider. Human life is full of vicissitudes and changes, so that 'tis impossible to enumerate all the lesser accidental alterations to which it is lyable. But the principal and most distinct scenes, in which a woman can be supposed regularly to be an actor, are these three, Virginitie: Marriage and Widowhood; which as they differ widely from each other, so for the discharging their respective duties, there are peculiar cautions worthy to be adverted to.

2. Virginitie is first in order of time, and if we will take *S. Pauls* judgment in respect of excellence also, 1 *Cor.* 7. And indeed she that preserves her self in that state upon

the account he mentions, v. 33. that *she may care for the things that are of the Lord, that she may be Holy both in Body and in Spirit*, deserves a great deal of Veneration, as making one of the nearest approaches to the Angelical State, And accordingly in the primitive time, such a Virginitie was had in a singular estimation, and by the assignment of the Schoolmen, hath a particular coronet of glory belonging to it. Nay even among the Heathens; a consecrated Virgin was lookt on as a thing most sacred. The Roman Vestals had extraordinary Priviledges allowed them by the state, and they were generally held in such reverence, that Testaments and other Depositums of the greatest trust were usually committed to their custody, as to the surest and most inviolable Sanctuary. Nay their presence was so to convicted malefactors; the Magistrates veiling their *faces* when they appear'd, and giving up the criminal to the commanding intercession of Virgin Innocence.

3. As for the religious orders of Virgins in the present Roman Church, tho some and those very great abuses have crept in; yet I think twere to be wished that those who suppress them in this nation, had confined themselves within the bounds of a reformation, by choosing rather to rectify and regulate, then abolish them.

4. But tho there be not among us such societies, yet there may be *Nuns* who are not profest. She who has devoted her heart to God, and the better to secure his Interest against the most insinuating rival of Human Love, intends to admit none, and prays that she may not; does by those humble purposes consecrate her self to God, and perhaps more acceptably, then if her presumption should make her more positive, and engage her in a vow she is not sure to perform.

5. But this is a case does not much need stating in our Clime, wherein Woemen are so little transported with this zeal of voluntary Virginitie, that there are but few can find patience for it, when necessary. An old maid is now thought such a curse, as no poetic fury can exceed; lookt on as the most calamitous Creature in nature. And I so far yield to the opinion, as to confess it so to those who are kept in that state against their Willis; but sure the Original

ginal of that misery is from the desire, not the restraint of Marriage; let them but suppress that once, and the other will never be their infelicity. But I must not be so unkind to the sex, as to think tis always such desire that gives them averſion to Celibacy; I doubt not many are frighted only with the vulgar contempt under which that ſtate lies: for which if there be no cure, yet there is the ſame Armor againſt this which is againſt all other cauſeleſs reproaches, *viz.* to condemn it. Yet I am a little apt to believe there may be a prevention in the caſe. If the ſuperannuated Virgins would behave themſelves with gravity and reſervedneſs, addiſt themſelves to the ſtrictest vertu and piety, they would give the World ſome Cauſe to believe, 'twas, not their neceſſity but their choice which kept them unmarried; that they were pre-engag'd to a better Amour; eſpouſed to the ſpiritual Bridegroom: & this would give them among the ſoberer ſort at leaſt the reverence and eſteem of Matrons. Or if after all caution and endeavour, they chance to fall under the Tongues of malicious ſlanderers: this is no more than happens in all other inſtances of duty; and if contempt be to be avoided, Chriſtianity it ſelf muſt be quitted, as well as Virgin Chaſtity. But if on the other ſide they endeavour to diſguiſe their age, by all the impoſtures and gaieties of a youthful dreſs and behaviour, if they ſtill herd themſelves among the youngſt and vainest company, betray a young mind in an aged Body: this muſt certainly expoſe them to ſcorn and cenſure. If no play, no ball, or dancing meeting can eſcape them, people will undoubtedly conclude, that they deſire, to put off themſelves, to meet with chap-men, who ſo conſtantly keep the fairs, I wiſh therefore they would more univerſally try the former expedient, which I am confident is the beſt amulet againſt the reproch they ſo much dread, and may alſo deliver them from the danger of a more coſtly remedy, I mean that of an unequal and imprudent match, which many have ruſh'd upon as they have ran frighted from the other, and ſo by an unhappy contradiction, do both ſtay long, and marry haſtily, gall their neck to ſpare their ears, and run into the yoke rather than hear ſo ſlight and unreaſonable a reproch. They need not I think, be upbraided with the folly of ſuch

an election, since their own experience is (to many of them) but too severe a monitor. I shall not insist farther on this, but having given the elder virgins that ensign of their seniority as to stand first in my discourse, I shall now address more generally to the rest.

6. And here the two grand elements essential to the Virgin state are Modesty and Obedience, which, tho necessary to all, yet are in a more eminent degree requir'd here; and therefore, tho I have spoken largely of the vertu of Modesty in the first part of this tract, yet it will not be impertinent to make some farther reflections on it, by way of application to Virgins, in whom modesty should appear in its highest elevation, and should come up to Shamefacedness. Her look, her speech, her whole behaviour should own an humble distrust of her self; she is to look on her self, but as a novice, a probationer in the world, and must take this time, rather to learn and observe, then to dictate and prescribe. Indeed there is scarce any thing looks more indecent, then to see a young maid too forward and confident in her talk. 'Tis the opinion of the wise man, Eccclus. 32. 8, that *a young man should scarce speak tho twice asked*: in proportion to which, 'twill sure not become a young woman, whose sex puts her under greater restraints, to be either importunate or magisterial in her discourses. And tho that which former ages called Boldness, is now only Assurance and good breeding, yet we have seen such bad superstructures upon that foundation, as sure will not much recommend it to any considering person.

7. But there is another breach of Modesty as it relates to Chastity, in which they are yet more especially concern'd. The very name of virgin imports a most critical niceness in that point. Every indecent curiosity, or impure fancy, is a deflowring of the mind, and every the least corruption of them gives some degrees of defilement to the body too: for between the state of pure immaculat Virginity and arrant Prostitution there are many intermedial steps, and she that makes any of them, is so far departed from her first integrity. She that listens to any wanton discourse, has violated her ears; she that speaks any, her
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ongue ; every immodest glance vitiates her eye, and every the lightest act of dalliance leaves something of stain and sullage behind it. There is therefore a most rigorous caution requisite herein : for as nothing is more clean and white then a perfect Virginity, so every the least spot or blemish is more discernable. Besides, youth is for the most part flexible, and easily warps into a crookedness, and therefore can never set it self too far from a temptation. Our tender blossoms we are fain to skreen and shelter, because every unkindly air nips and destroyes them; and nothing can be more nice and delicate then a maiden vertu, which ought not to be expos'd to any of those malignant airs which may last and corrupt it, of which God knows there are too many, some that blow from within, and others from without.

8. Of the first sort there is none more mischievous than curiosity, a temptation which foil'd human Nature even in Paradise : and therefore sure a feeble girl ought not to trust her self with that which subdued her better fortified parent. The truth is, an affected ignorance cannot be so commendable in other cases as it is commendable in this. Indeed it is the surest and most invincible guard, for she who is curious to know indecent things, 'tis odds but she will too soon and too dearly buy the learning. The suppressing and detesting all such curiosities is therefore that eminent and fundamental piece of continence I would recommend to them, as that which will protect and secure all the rest.

9. But when they have set this guard upon themselves, they must provide against forreign assaul's too, the most dangerous whereof I take to be ill Company, and Idleness. Against the first they must provide by a prudent choise of conversation which should generally be of their own sex; yet not all of that neither, but such who will at least entertain them innocently, if not profitably. Against the second they may secure themselves by a constant series of employments : I mean not such frivolous ones as are more idle then doing nothing ; but such as are ingenuous, and some way worth their time, wherein as the first place is to be given to the offices of piety, so in the intervals of those, there are divers others, by which they may not

not unusefully fill up the vacancies of their time; such are the acquiring of any of those ornamental improvements which become their quality, as Writing, Needle-works, Languages, Music, or the like. If I should here insert the art of Oeconomy and Household managery, I should not think I affronted them in it; that being the most proper feminine business, from which neither wealth nor greatness can totally absolve them: and a little of the theory in their parents house, would much assist them towards the practice when they come to their own. In a word there are many parts of knowledge useful for a civil as well as divine life; and the improving themselves in any of those is a rational employment.

10. But I confess I know not how to reduce to that head many of those things which from diversions are now kept up to be the solemn business of many young Ladies (and I doubt of some old) such is in the first place gaming, a recreation whose lawfulness I question not, whilst it keeps within the bounds of a recreation: but when it sets up for a calling, I know not whence it derives its license. And a calling sure it seems to be with some, a laborious one too, such as they toyl night and day at, nay do not allow themselves that remission which the Laws both of God and man have provided for the meanest mechanic: the Sabbath is to them no day of rest, but this Trade goes on when all shops are shut. I know not how they satisfy themselves in such an habitual waste of their time (besides all the incidental faults of avarice and anger) but I much doubt that pleasure whatsoever it is, which passes with them, will scarce hold weight at his Tribunal, who has commanded us to *redeem* not *sing away* our time.

11. There is another thing to which some devote a very considerable part of their time, and that is the Reading of Romances, which seems now to be thought the peculiar and only becoming study of young Ladies. I confess their youth may a little adapt it to them when they are children, and I wish they were always in their event as harmless, but I fear they often leave ill impressions behind them. Those amorous passions, which tis neither design to paint to the utmost life, are apt to insinuate themselves into their un-

are every readers, and by an unhappy inversion a copy shall produce an Original. When a poor young Creature shall read here of some triumphant Beauty, that as I know not how many captiv'd Knights prostrate at her feet, she will probably be tempted to think it a fine thing; and may reflect how much she loses time, that has not yet subdu'd one heart: and then her business will be to spread her nets; lay her toils to catch some body, who will more fatally ensnare her. And when she has once wound her self into an Amour, those Authors are subtil casuists for all difficult cases that may occur in it, will instruct in the necessary Artifice, of eluding Parents and Friends, and put her own ruine perfectly in her own power. And truly this seems to be so natural a consequent of this sort of study, that of all the now divertisements that look so innocently, they can scarce fall upon any more hazardous. Indeed it is very difficult to imagine what vast mischief is done to the World, by the deep false notions and images of things; particularly of Love and Honor, those noblest concerns of human life, represented in these Mirrors: but when we consider upon what principles the Duellists and Hectors of the Age defend their outrages; and how great a devotion is paid to lust, instead of vertuous Love; we can not be to seek for the Gospel which makes these Doctrines appear orthodox.

12. As for the entertainments which they find abroad, such they may be innocent. or otherwise according as they are managed. The common intercourse of Civility is a debt to Humanity, and therefore mutual visits may often be necessary, and so (in some degree) may be several harmless and healthful recreations which may call them abroad for I write not now to Nuns, and have no purpose to confine them to a Cloister. Yet on the other side to be alwayes wandering, is the condition of a vagabond, and of the two 'tis better to be a Prisoner to ones home, then a Stranger. *Solomon* links it with some very unlaudable qualities of a woman, *Prov. 7. 11.* that *her feet abide not in her house*, and 'tis unhappy impotence not to be able to stay at home, when there is any thing to be seen abroad; that any mask, or revel, any jollity of others must be their rack and torment, if they can not get to it. Alas such

such meetings are not so sure to be safe, that they had need be frequent, and they are of all others least like to be safe to those, who much dote on them: and therefore those that find they do so, had need to counterbias their minds, and set them to something better, and by more serious entertainments supplant those vanities, which at the best are childish; and may often prove worse, it being too probable that those Dinah's which are still gadding, tho' on pretence to see only the daughters of the land, *Gen. 34.* may at last meet with a son of *Hamar*.

13. There is also another great devourer of time subservient to the former, I mean dressing: for they that Love to be seen much abroad, will be sure to be seen in the most exact form. And this is an employment that does not steal but challenge their time; what they waste here is *cum Privilegio*, it being by the verdict of this age the proper business, the one science wherein a young Lady is to be perfectly vers'd; so that now all vertuous emulation is converted into this single ambition, who shall excel in this faculty. A vanity which I confess is more excusable in the younger than the elder sort; they being supposable not yet to have outworn the reliques of their childhood, to which toys and gaiety were proportionable. Besides 'tis sure allowable upon a soberer account, that they who design Marriage should give themselves the advantage of decent ornaments, and not by the negligent rudeness of their dress belie Nature, and render themselves less amiable than she has made them. But all this being granted, 'twill by no means justify that excessive curiosity and solicitude that expence of time and money too which is now used; a very moderate degree of all those will serve for that ordinary decency which they need provide for, will keep them from the reproch of an affected singularity, which is as much as a sober person need take care for. And I must take leave to say, that in order to marriage, such a moderation is much likelier to succeed than the contrary extravagance. Among the pruder sort of men I am sure it is, if it be not among the loose and vain, against which 'twill be their guard, and so do them the greater service: for certainly he that chooses a wife for those qualities for which a wife man would refuse

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her, understands so little what marriage is, as portends no great felicity to her that shall have him. But if they desire to marry men of sobriety and discretion, they are obliged in justice to bring the same qualities they expect, which will be very ill evidenced by that excess and vanity we now speak of.

14. For to speak a plain (tho perhaps ungrateful) truth; this (together with some of the modish liberties now in use) is it, which keeps so many young Ladies about the Town unmarried till they lose the epithet of young. Sober men are afraid to venture upon a humor so disagreeing to their own, least whil'st (according to the primitive reason of marriage) they seek a help, they espouse a ruine. But this is especially dreadful to a plain Country Gentleman, who looks upon one of these fine woman as a Gaudy Idol, to whom if he once become a votary, he must sacrifice a great part of his fortune, and all his content. How reasonable that apprehension is, the many wracks of considerable families do too evidently attest. But I presume some of the nicer Ladies have such a contempt of any thing that they please to call rustic, that they will not much regret the averting of those whom they so despise. They will not perhaps while they are in pursuit or hopes of others; but when those fail, these will be lookt on as a well-come reserve, and therefore 'twill be no prudence to cut themselves off from that last resort, least they (as many have done) be taken themselves to much worse. For as in many instances 'tis the Country which feeds and maintains the grandeur of the Town, so of all commerces there, marriage would soonest fail, if all Rural supplies were cut off.

15. But I have pursued this speculation farther than perhaps my virgin readers will thank me for, I shall return to that which it was brought to inforce, and beseech them that if not to Men, yet to approve themselves to God, they will confine themselves in the matter of their dress within the due limits of decency and sobriety. I shall not direct them to those strict rules which *Tertullian* and some other of the ancient Fathers have prescribed in this matter; my petition is only that our virgins would at least so take care of their bodies, as Persons that also have a soul; which

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if they can be perswaded to, they may reserve much of their time for more worthy uses than those of the Comb, the Tuillets, and the Glasse. And truly 'tis not a little their concern to do so, for this spring of their age is that critical instant that must either confirm or blast the hopes of all the succeeding seasons. The minds of young people are usually compared to a blank sheet of paper, equally capable of the best or worst impressions; 'tis pitty they should be fill'd with childish scrawls, and little insignificant figures, but 'tis shame and horror they should be stain'd with any vicious characters, any blots of impurity or dishonor. To prevent which let the severest notions of modesty and honor be early and deeply impress'd upon their souls, graven as with the point of a Diamand, that they may be as indelible as they are indispensibly necessary to the virgin state.

16. There is also another very requisite quality, and that is Obedience. The younger sort of virgins are supposed to have parents, or if any has bin so unhappy as to lose them early, they commonly are left in the charge of some friend or guardian, that is to supply the place; so that they cannot be to seek to whom this obedience is to be paid. And it is not more their duty than their interest to pay it. Youth is apt to be foolish in its designs, and heady in the pursuit of them; and there can be nothing more deplorable than to have it left to its self. And therefore God, who permits not even the brutes to destitute their young ones till they attain to the perfection of their kind, has put children under the guidance and protection of their parents, till by the maturing of their judgments they are qualified to be their own conductors. Now this Obedience (as that which is due to all other superiors) is to extend it self to all things that are either good or indifferent, and has no clause of exception, but only where the command is unlawful. And in so wide a scene of action there will occur so many particular occasions of submission, that they had need have a great reverence of their parents judgments, and distrust of their own. And if it should happen that some parents are not qualified to give them the former, yet the general imbecillity of their age, will remain a

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constant ground of the latter : so that they may safer venture themselves to their parents misguidance , then their own ; by how much the errors of humility and obedience , are lesse malignant then those of presumption and arrogance.

17. But this is a doctrine which will scarce pass for orthodox with many of the young women of our dayes , with whom 'tis prejudice enough against the prudentest advice that it comes from their parents. 'Tis the grand ingenuity of these times to turn every thing into Ridicule ; and if a girl can but rally smartly upon the sober admonition of a parent , she concludes she is the abler person ; takes her self for a wit , and the other for a fop ; (a bugbear word devised to a fright all seriousness and sobriety out of the World ;) and learn not only to disobey but to contemn. Indeed the great confidence that youth now seems to have of its self , as it is very indecent , so is it extremely pernicious. Children that will attempt to go alone before their time , oft get dangerous falls ; and when those who are but little removed from children , shall cast off the wiser conduct of others , they oft sadly miscarry by their own.

18. I know this age has so great a contempt of the former , that 'tis but matter of scorn to alledge any of the customs , else I should say that the liberties that are taken now , would then have bin startled at. They that should then have seen a young maid rambling abroad without her mother or some other prudent person , would have lookt on her as a stray , and thought it but a neighbourly office to have brought her home ; whereas now 'tis a rarity to see them in any company graver then themselves , and she that goes with her parent (unless it be such a parent as is as wild as her self) thinks she does but walk abroad with her jailor. But sure there are no small mischiefs that attend this liberty , for it leaves them perfectly to the choice of their company , a thing of too weighty an importance for giddy heads to determin ; who will be sure to elect such as are of their own humor , with whom they may keep up a traffic of little impertinencies and trifling entertainments ; and so by consequence condemn themselves never to grow wiser

wiser which they might do by an ingenuous conversation. Nay 'tis well if that negative ill be the worst, for it gives opportunity to any that have ill designs upon them. It will be easy getting into their company, who have no guard to keep any body out, and as easy by little compliances and flatteries to insinuate into their good graces; who have not the sagacity to discern to what insidious purposes those blandishments are directed; and when they once begin to nibble at the bait, to be pleased with the Courtship, 'tis great odds they do not escape the hook.

19. Alas how many poor innocent creatures have bin thus indiscernibly ensnared; have at first perhaps only liked the wit and raillery, perhaps the language and address, then the freedom and good humor; till at last they come to like the person. It is therefore a most necessary caution for young women, not to trust too much to their own conduct, but to own their dependance on those, to whom God and nature has subjected them, and to look on it not as their restraint and burden, but as their shelter and Protection. For where once the authority of a Parent comes to be despis'd, tho in the lightest instance, it lays the foundation of utmost disobedience. She that will not be prescrib'd to in the choise of her ordinary diverting company, will less be so in chusing the fixt companion of her life; and we find it often eventually true, that those who govern themselves in the former, will not be govern'd by their friends in the latter, but by pre-engagements of their own prevent their elections for them.

20. And this is one of the highest injuries they can do their Parents, who have such a native right in them, that 'tis no less an injustice then disobedience to dispose of themselves without them. This right of the Parent is so undoubted, that we find God himself gives way to it, and will not suffer the most holy pretence, no not that of a Vow, to invade it, as we may see his own stating of the case, *Numb. 30.* How will he then resent it, to have his so indispensable a Law violated upon the impulse of an impotent passion, an amorous inclination? Nor is the folly less then the sin: they injure and afflict their Parents, but they generally ruine and undo themselves. And that upon a

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double account, first as to the secular part. Those that are so rash as to make such matches, cannot be imagined so provident as to examine how agreeable 'tis to their interest; or to contrive for any thing beyond the marriage. The thoughts of their future temporal conditions (like those of the eternal) can find no room amidst their foolish raptures; but as if love were indeed that Deity which the Poets feigned, they depend on it for all, and take no farther care. And event does commonly too soon instruct them in the deceitfulness of that trust; love being so unable to support them, that it cannot maintain its self; but quickly expires when it has brought the lovers into those straits, from whence it cannot rescue them. So that indeed it does but play the decoy with them, brings them into the noose, and then retires. For when secular wants begin to pinch them, all the transports of their kindness do usually convert into mutual accusations, for having made each other miserable.

21. And indeed there is no reason to expect any better event; because in the second place they forfeit their title to the divine blessing; nay they put themselves out of the capacity to ask it, it being a ridiculous impudence to beg God to prosper the transgressions of his Law. Such weddings seem to invoke only some of the Poetic Romantic Deities, *Venus* and *Hymen*, from whence they derive a happiness as fictitious as are the Gods that are to send it. Let all Virgins therefore religiously observe this part of Obedience to their Parents, that they may not only have their benediction, but Gods. And to that purpose let this be laid as a fundamental rule, that they never harken to any proposal of marriage made them from any other hand; but when any such overture is made, divert the address from her self and direct it to her parents, which will be the best test imaginable for any pretender: for if he know himself worthy of her, he will not fear to avow his design to them; and therefore if he decline that, 'tis a certain symptom, he is conscious of something that he knows will not give a valuable consideration; so that this course will repel no suitor, but such as it is their interest not to admit. Besides 'tis most agreeable to the Virgin modesty, which should make marriage an act

act rather of their obedience than their choice; and they that think their friends too slow paced in the matter, and seek to outrun them, give cause to suspect they are spur'd on by somewhat too warm desires.

22. But as a Daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her Parent, so (to hang the ballance even) I must say she is not obliged to force her own, by marrying where she cannot love; for a negative voice in the case is sure as much the child's right as the Parent's. It is true she ought well to examine the grounds of her aversion, and if they prove only childish and fanciful, should endeavor to correct them by reason and sober consideration; but if after all she cannot leave to hate, I think she should not proceed to marry. I confess I see not how she can without a sacrilegious hypocrisie, vow so solemnly to love where she at the instant actually abhors: and where the married state is begun with such a perjury, 'tis no wonder to find it continued on at the same rate; that other parts of the vow be also violated; and that she observe the negative part no more than the positive, and as little forsake others as she does heartily cleave to her husband. I fear this is a consequence whereof there are too many sad instances now extant; for though doubtless, there are some Vertues which will hold out against all the temptations their aversions, can give, nay which do at last even conquer those aversions, and render their duty as easie as they have kept it safe; yet we find there are but some that do so: that it is no inseparable property of the sex, and therefore it is sure too hazardous an experiment for any of them to venture on.

23. And if they may not upon the more generous motive of Obedience, much less may they upon the worse inducements of Avarice and Ambition; for a woman to make a vow to the man, and yet intend only to marry his fortune, or his title, is the basest insincerity and such as in any other kind of civil contracts, would not only have the infamy but the punishment of a cheat. Nor will it at all secure them, that this is only liable to Gods tribunal, for that is not like to make the doom less but more heavy, it being as the Apostle witnesses, *a fearful thing to fall into*

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Sect. I.

Of Virgins.

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the hands of the living God. Heb. 20. 31. In a word, marriage is Gods ordinance, and should be consider'd as such; not made a stale to any unworthy design. And it may well be presum'd, one cause why so few matches are happy, that they are not built upon a right foundation. Some are grounded upon wealth, some on beauty, too sandy bottoms God knows to raise any lasting felicity on: whilst in the interim, vertu and piety, the only solid Basis for that superstructure, are scarce ever consider'd. Thus God is commonly left out of the consultation. The Lawyers are resorted to, to secure the settlements all sorts of Artificers to make up the equipage, but he is neither advis'd with as to the motives, nor scarce supplicated as to the event of wedding. Indeed 'tis a deplorable sight to see with what lightness and unconcernedness young people go to that weightiest action of their lives that a marriage day is but a kind of Bacchanal, a more licensed avowed revel, when if they duly consider'd it, 'tis the hinge upon which their future life moves, which turns them over to a happy or miserable being; and therefore ought to be enter'd upon with the greatest seriousness and devotion. Our Church advises excellently in the preface to matrimony, and I wish they would not only give it the hearing at the time, but make it their study a good while before: yea and the marriage-vow too, which is so strict and lawful a bond, that methinks they had need well weigh every branch of it, ere they enter it; and by the ferventest prayers implore that God, who is the witness, to be their assistant too in its performance.

Sect. II.

SECT. II.

Of Wives.

AND now having conducted the Virgin to the entrance of another state, I must shift the Scene and attend her thither also. And here she is lanced into a wide sea, that one relation of a Wife drawing after it many others; for as she espouses the man so she does his Obligations also; and wherever he by ties of nature or alliance owes a reverence or kindness, she is no less a debtor. Her Marriage is an adoption into his Family, and therefore she is to every branch of it to pay what their stations there do respectively require: to define which more particularly, would be a work of more length then profit. I shall therefore confine the present consideration to the relation she stand in to her husband, and (what is usually concomitant with that) her children, and her servants, and so shall consider her in the three capacities of a Wife, a Mother, and a Mistress.

2. In that of a Wife her duty has several aspects, as it relates, first to his Person, secondly to his Reputation, thirdly to his Fortune. The first debt to his Person is Love, which we find set as the prime Article in the marriage vow; and indeed that is the most essential requisite; without this 'tis only a Bargain and Compact, a Tyranny perhaps on the mans part, and a Slavery on the womans. 'Tis Love only that cements the hearts, and where that union is wanting, 'tis but a shadow, a carcass of Marriage. Therefore as it is very necessary to bring some degree of this, to this State; so 'tis no less to maintain and improve it in it. This is it which facilitates all other duties of marriage; makes the yoke sit so lightly, that it rather pleases then galls. It should therefore be the study of Wives to preserve this flame; that like the vestial fire it may never go out: and to that end carefully to guard it from all those things which

which are naturally apt to extinguish it ; of which kind are all frowardness and little perverseness of humor , are sullen and morose behavior, which by taking off from the delight and complacency of conversation , will by degrees wear off the kindness.

3. But of all I know nothing more dangerous then that unhappy passion of Jealousy, which tho'tis said to be the child of love, yet like the viper, its birth is the certain destruction of the parent , As therefore they must be nicely careful to give their husbands no colour, no least umbrage for it ; so should they be as resolute to resist all that occurs to themselves , be so far from that busy curiosity, that industry to find causes of suspicion ; that even where they presented themselves , they should avert the consideration ; put the most candid construction upon any doubtful action. And indeed charity in this instance , has not more of the Dove then of the Serpent. It is infinitely the wisest course, both in relation to her present quiet , and her future innocence. The entertaining a jealous fancy, is the admitting the most treacherous, the most disturbing Inmate in the World , and she opens her breast to a fury that lets it in. 'Tis certainly one of the most enchanting frensies imaginable , keeps her alwayes in a most restless impotunate search after that which she dreads and abhors to find , and makes her equally miserable when she is injured , and when she is not.

4. And as she totally loses her eases , so 'tis odds but she will part also with some degrees of her innocence. Jealousie is commonly attended with a black train ; it musters all the forces of our irascible part , to abet its quarrel ; Wrath and Anger, Malice and Revenge : and by how much the female impotence to govern those passions is the greater ; so much the more dangerous is it to admit that which will so sure set them in an uprore. For if *Jealousy* be as the wise man sayes *the rage of a man* , Prov. 6. 32. we may well think it may be the fury, the madness of a woman. And indeed all ages have given tragical instances of it, not only in the most incident fierceness and clamor , but in the solemn mischiefs of actual revenges. Nay 'tis to be doubted there have bin some whose malice has rebounded, and have

ruined themselves in spight, have bin adulterous by way of retaliation: and taken more scandalous liberties than those they complained of in their husbands. And when such enormous effects as these are the issues of jealousy, it ought to keep women on the strictest guard against it.

5. But perhaps it may be said that some are not left to their Jealousy and conjectures; but have more demonstrative proofs. In this age 'tis indeed no strange thing for men to publish their sin as *Sodom*, and the offender does sometimes not discover but boast his crime. In this case I confess 'twill be scarce possible to disbelieve him; but even here a wife has this advantage, that she is out of the pain of Suspence; she knows the utmost, and therefore is now at leisure to convert all that industry which she would have used for the discovery, to fortify her self against a known calamity; which sure she may as well do in this as in any other; a patient Submission being the one Catholicon in all distresses; and as the slightest can overwhelm us if we add our own impatience towards our sinking; so the greatest cannot, if we deny it that aid. They are therefore far in the wrong, who in case of this injury pursue their husbands with virulencies and reproches. This is as *Solomon* sayes, *Prov. 25. 20. The pouring vinegar upon niter*, applying corrosives when balsoms are most needed; whereby they not only increase their own smart, but render the wound incurable. They are not thunders and earth-quakes, but soft gentle rains that close the sciffures of the ground; and the breaches of Wedlock will never be cemented by storms and loud outcries. Many men have bin made worse, but scarce ever any better by it, for guilt covets nothing more than an opportunity of recriminating; and where the husband can accuse the wives bitterness, he thinks he needs no apology for his own lust.

6. A Wife Dissimulation, or very calm notice is sure the likeliest means of reclaiming, for where men have not wholly put off humanity, there is a native compassion to a meek sufferer. We have naturally some regret to see a Lamb under the knife; whereas the impatient roaring of a swine diverts our pitty; so that Patience in this case is as much the interest as duty of a Wife.

7. But

7. But there is another instance wherein that vertue has
 a severer trial, and that is when a Wife lies under the
 causeless jealousies of the husband, (I say causeless, for
 they be just 'tis not so much a season for patience, as
 for repentance and reformation.) This is sure one of the
 greatest calamities that can befall a vertuous woman, who
 she accounts nothing so dear as her loyalty and honor;
 she thinks no infelicity can equal the aspersing of those;
 specially when 'tis from him, to whom she has bin the
 most solicitous to approve her self. Yet God who permits
 nothing but what he directs to some wise and gracious end,
 as an overruling hand in this as well as in all other events
 of life; and therefore it becomes every woman in that con-
 dition, to examine strictly what she has done to provoke
 so severe a scourge; for tho her heart condemn her not of
 any falseness to her husband, yet probably it may of many
 disloyalties to her God, and then she is humbly to accept
 even of this traducing of her innocence, as the punishment
 of her iniquity, and bear it with the same temper where
 with David did the unjust revilings of Shimei, *2 Kings 16. 10.*
Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.

8. And when she has made this penitent reflection on
 her real guilts, she may then with more courage encounter
 those imaginary ones which are charged on her; wherein
 she is to use all prudent and regular means for her justifi-
 cation, that being a debt she owes to truth, and her own
 name; but if after all, the suspicion remains still fixed (as
 commonly those which are the most unreasonable are the
 most obstinate) she may still solace her self in her inte-
 rity, and Gods approbation of it. Nor ought she to
 think her self desolate, that has her appeal open to heaven.
 Therefore whilst she can look both inward and upward
 with comfort, why should she chuse to fix her eyes only
 on the object of her grief; and whilst her own complaint
 is of defamation, why should she so dishonor God and a
 good conscience, as to shew any thing can be more forcible
 to oppress, then they are to relieve and support? And if
 she may not indulge to grief, much less may she to anger,
 and bitterness.

9. Indeed if she consider how painful a passion jealousy is, as her husband will more need her pitty, who tho he be unjust to her, is yet cruel to himself; and as we do not use to hate and malign those Lunatics who in their fits beat their friends, and cut and gash themselves, but rather make it our care to put all harmful engines out of their way; so should the wife not despitefully ruminate upon the injury, but wisely to contrive to avert his temptations to more, by denying her self even the most innocent liberties if she see they disatisfy him. I know there have bin some of another opinion, and as if they thought jealousy were to be cured by majoration, have in an angry contentment done things to inflame it; put on an unwonted freedom and jollity, to shew their husbands how litt'e they had secur'd themselves by their distrust. But this as it is no Christian, so I conceive it is no prudent expedient; it serves to strengthen not only the husbands suspicion, but his party too and make many others of his mind; and 'tis a little to be feared, that by using so to brave the Jealousy, they may at last come to verify it. I have bin the longer on this theme because as Jealousie is the most fatal pest of a married life so I think it more ordinarily occurs among people of quality, and with the worst and most durable effects; yet whatever pretences people may take hence, the marriage vow is too fast a knot to be loosened by fancies and chimeras; let a woman therefore be the person suspecting or suspected neither will absolve her from that love to her husband she has sworn to pay.

10. But alas what hope is there that these greater temptations shall be resisted, when we see every the slightest gust is now adays too strong for the matrimonial love may indeed it does of course fall of it self, which is an even so much expected, that tis no wonder to see it expire with the first circuit of the Moon; but it is every bodie's admiration to see it last one of the Sun. And sometimes it vanishes so cleerly, as not to leave so much as a shadow behind it, not so much as the formalities of Marriage: once bed, one house cannot hold them: as if they had bin put together like case shot in a gun, only that they might the more forcibly scatter several wayes. Nay, as if this were

designed and intended in the first addresses unto marriage; separate maintenance is of course a beforehand contracted for, and becomes as solemn a part of the settlement, as a jointure is. *Plutarch* observes of the ancient *Romans*, that for 230. years after founding of their state, there never was one example of any married couple that separated: it is not likely they could have a more binding form of marriage then ours is, the difference must lye between their veracity and our falseness.

11. But even among^t those who desert not each other, too many do mutually fall from that entireness and affection which is the soul of marriage; and to help on the declination, there are fashionable Maxims taken up, to make men and their wives the greatest strangers to each other. Thus 'tis pronounced a piece of ill Breeding, a sign of a country Gentleman, to see a man go abroad with his own wife (I suppose those who brought up these rules are not to seek what use to make of them). And were the time of most of the modish couples computed, 'twould be found they are but few of their waking hours I might say minutes together; so, that if nothing else, meer desuetude and intermission of conversation must needs allay, if not quite extinguish their kindness. But I hope there are yet many who do not think the authority of a fashion greater then that of a vow; and such will still think it their duty both to own and cherish that kindness and affection they have so solemnly promis'd.

12. Another debt to the person of a husband is Fidelity: for as she has espoused all his interests, so she is obliged to be true to them, to keep all his secrets, to inform him of his dangers, yea and in a mild and gentle manner to admonish him of his faults. This is the most genuine act of friendship: therefore she who is placed in the neerest and most intimate degree of that relation, must not be wanting in it. She that lyes in his bosom should be a kind of second conscience to him, by putting him in mind both of his duty and his aberration: and as long as she can be but patiently heard 'tis her sin to omit it; 'tis the greatest treachery to his noblest, to his immortal part, and such as the most officious cares of his other interests can never expiate.

Nay indeed she is unfaithful to her self in it, there being nothing that does so much secure the happiness of a Wife as the vertu and piety, of the husband, Yet, tho this is to have her chiefest care, as being his principal interest, she is to neglect none of the inferior, but contribute her utmost to his advantage in all his concerns.

13. Beyond all these the matrimonial fidelity has a special notion as it relates to the Bed; and in that the wife is to be most severely scrupulous, and never to admit so much as a thought or imagination, much less any party or treaty contrary to her loyalty. 'Tis true wantonness is one of the foulest blots that can stain any of the sex; but 'tis infinitely more odious in the married, it being in them an accumulation of crimes: perjury added to uncleanness; the infamy of their family superstructed upon their own; and accordingly all Laws have made a difference in their punishments. Adultery was by Gods own award punished with death among the Jews, *Levit. 20. 10.* And it seems it was so agreeable to natural justice, that divers other Nations did the like; and I know no reason, but the difficulty of detection, that should any where give it a milder sentence. The son of *Sirach* has excellently describ'd the several gradations of the guilt, *Ecclef. 23. 1.* which I shall desire the Reader to consult: which who so does, must certainly wonder at the Alchemy of this age, that from such a mass of shame and infamy can extract matter of confidence that those who lie under so many brands and stigmas, are so far from hiding their faces, that none shew them with so much boldness; and the assurance of the guilty far exceeds that of the innocent. But impudence is a slender shelter for guilt, and serves rather to betray than hide; so that they are not able to outface the opinions of men, much less can they the judgments of God; who as he was solemnly invoc'd as witness to their vow, so by his omnipresence is against their wills a witness too of its violations.

14. Another duty to the person of her husband is obedience, a word of a very harsh sound in the ears of some wives, but is certainly the duty of all: and that not only by their promise of it, tho that were sufficient; but from an original of much older date, it being the mulct that was

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laid upon the first womans disobedience to God that she (and all derived from her) should be subject to the husband; so that the contending for superiority, is an attempt to reverse that fundamental Law, which is almost as ancient as the World. But surely God with whom there is no shadow of change, will not make acts of repeal to satisfy the petulancy of a few masterless women. That statute will still stand in force, and if it cannot awe them into an observance, will not fail to consign them to punishment. And indeed this fault is commonly its own lictor, and does anticipate (tho not avert) its final doom: the imperiousness of a woman does often raise those storms, wherein her self is ship-wrack'd. How pleasantly might many women have lived if they had not affection dominion. Nay how much of their will might they have had, if they had not struggled for it. For let a man be of never so gentle a temper (unless his head be softer then his heart) such an usurpation will awake him to assert his right. But if he be of a sower severe nature, if he have as great a desire of rule as she, backt with a much better title, what Tempests, what Hurricanes must two such opposite winds produce? And at last 'tis commonly the wives lot, after an uncreditable unjust war, to make as disadvantageous a peace; this (like all other ineffective rebellions) serving to straiten her yoke, to turn an ingenuous subjection into a slavish servitude: so that certainly it is not only vertue, but the wisdom of wives to do that upon duty, which at last they must (with more unsupportable circumstances) do upon necessity.

15. And as they owe the severals to the person of the husband, so there is also a debt to his reputation. This they are to be extremely tender of, to advance it by making all that is good in him as conspicuous, as public as they can; setting his worth in the clearest light, but putting his infirmities in the shade; casting a veil upon those to skreen them from the eyes of others, nay (as far as is possible) from their own too; their being nothing acquir'd to the wife by contemplating the husbands weakness, but a temptation of despising him; which tho bad enough in it self, is yet rendred worse by that train of mischievous

consequences which usually attend it. In case therefore of any notable imperfections in him, her safest way will be to consider them no farther then she can be instrumental to the curing them; but to divert from those, and reflect upon her own, which perhaps if impartially weighed, may ballance, if not overpoise his. And indeed those wives who are apt to blaze their husbands faults, do shew that they have either little adverted to their own, or else find them so great, that they are forced to that art of diversion, that seek in his Infamy to drown theirs. But that project is a little unlucky, for nothing does in sober Judges create greater prejudice to a woman, then to see her forward in impeaching her husband.

16. But besides this immediate tenderness of his reputation, there is another by way of reflection, which consists in a care that she her self do nothing which may redound to his dishonour: there is so strict union between a man and his Wife, that the Law counts them one person, and consequently they can have no divided interest, so that the misbehaviour of the woman reflects ignominiously on the man; it therefore concerns them as well upon their husbands as their own account, to abstain even from all appearance of evil, and provide that themselves be (what *Cæsar* is said to have requir'd of his wife) not only without guilt, but without scandal also.

17. Another part of the wives duty relates to her husbands fortune, the management whereof is not ordinarily the wives province; but where the husband thinks fit to make it so, she is oblig'd to administer it with her best care and industry; not by any neglect of hers to give others opportunity of defrauding him, yet on the other side not by an immoderate tenacity or griping, to bring upon him and her self the reproch, and which is worse the curse that attends exaction and oppression. But this is not usually the wives field of action, tho he that shall consider the description which *Salomon* gives of a virtuous Wife, *Prov. 31.* will be apt to think her Province is not so narrow and confin'd as the humor of the age would represent it. He tells us, that she seeks wool and flax, and works diligently with her hands, that she is like the merchants ships, and brings her food from far.

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That *she considers a field and buys it, and with the fruit of her hands plants a vineyard, &c.* And least this should be imagined to be the character of a mean Country Dame, he adds that *her boushold is cloathed in scarlet, and that her husband sits among the Eld. rs of the Land.* It were easy to give Instances from history of the advantageous menage and active industry of Wives, not only in single persons, but in whole Nations. But nothing can be more pregnant, then that among the *Romans*: in the very height and flourish of the Empire *Augustus* himself scarce wore anything but of the *Manufacture of his Wife, his Sister, Daughters, and Nieces*, as *Suetonius* assures us. Should the gay lilies of our fields, which neither sow nor *st* in nor gather into barns be exerted from furnishing others, and left to clothe themselves, tis to be doubted they would reverse our Saviours Parallel of *Solomons glories*, and no beggar in all his rags would be arrayed like one of these, *Luc. 12. 27.*

18. But we will be yet more kind and impose only negative thrift on the Wife, not to waste and embezzle her husbands estate, but to confine her expences within such limits as that can easily admit, a caution which if all women had observed; many noble Families had been preserv'd of which there now remains no other memorial but that they sell a Sacrifice to the profuse vanity of a Woman; and I fear this age is like to provide many more such monuments for the next. Our Ladies, as if they emulated the Roman Luxury (which *Seneca* and *Pliny* describe with so much indignation) do sometimes wear about them the revenues of a rich Family; and those that cannot reach to that, shew how much tis against their Wills they sell lower, by the vast variety and excess of such things as they can possibly compass; so much extravagance not only in their own dress, but that of their houses and apartments, as if their vanity like the Leprosy we read of *Lev. 24.* had infected the very walls. And indeed tis a very spreading, fretting one, for the Furniture oft consumes the house, and the house consumes the land; so that if some Gentlemen were to calculate their Estates, they might well reduce all to the Inventory

of *Scopias* the *Thessaliam*, who profess his all lay only in such Toyes as did him no good. Women are now skilfull Chymists, and can quickly turn their husbands earth into Gold: but they pursue the experiment too far, make that Gold too volatile, and let it all vapor away in insignificant (tho gaudy) trifles.

19. Nor is it ever like to be otherwise with those that immoderately affect the Town, that forge of vanity, which supplies a perpetual spring of new temptations. 'Tis true there are some Ladies who are necessarily engaged to be there: their husband employments or fortunes have mark'd that out as their proper station, and where the ground of their stay is their duty, there is more reason to hope it will not betray them to ill, for temptations are most apt to assault stragglers, those that put themselves out of their proper road. And truly I see not who can more properly be said to be so, then those women whose means of subsistence lies in the Country, and yet will spend it no where but at *London*, which seems to carry something of opposition to Gods providence; who surely never caused their lot to fall, as the Psalmist speaks, *in a fair ground, in goodly heritages*, Psal. 16. with an intent they should never inhabit them, The 12 Tribes of Israel had their peculiar Portions in Canaan assign'd them by lot, *Jos. 14. 2.* and every one acquiesced in his part, dwelt in his own inheritance: had they bin impatient of living any where but in the Metropolis, had they all crouded to Jerusalem, all the rest of the Land would have bin as desolate before the captivity as it was after; none would have bin left but such as *Nabuzaradan* permitted to stay, *Jer. 52. 16.* *some of the poor to dresse the vines, and to till the ground.* And truly the same is like to be the fate of this nation, if this humor goes on as it has begun; which may in time prove as mischievous to the public as it daily is to private families.

20. But besides this 'tis yet farther to be consider'd, that where God gives an estate, he as the supreme landlord affixes something of duty, layes a kind of a rent-charge upon it, expects it should maintain both hospitality and charity; and sure both these are fittest to be done upon the place whence the ability of them rises. All public taxes use

so be levied where the estate lies, and I know not why these which are Gods assessments upon it, should not be paid there too. When a Gentlemans land becomes profitable unto him by the sweat and labor of his poor neighbors and tenants, 'twill be a kind of *muzzling of the ox*, 1 Cor. 9. 9. if they never tast of the fruit of their pains, if they shall never have the refreshment of a good meal, or an alms; which they are not very like to meet with, if all the profits be sent up to maintain an equipage, and keep up a parade in town. But alas 'tis often not only the annual profits that go that way, not only the crop, but the soil too; those luxuries usually pary upon the vitals, eat out the very heart of an estate, and many have stay'd in the Town 'till they have nothing left in the Country to retire to.

21. Now where this proceeds from the wife, what account can she give to her husband, whose easiness and indulgence (for that must be suppos'd in the case) she has so abus'd? as also to her posterity and family who for her pride must be brought low, reduc'd to a condition beneath their quality, because she affected to live above it? But she will yet worse answer it to her self, on whom she has brought not only the inconvenience but the guilt. 'Tis sure a lofty mind will feel smart enough of a fall; a diminution, much more an indigence will be sufficiently grievous to a vain and lavish humor; yet here it will farther have an additional sting, from the conscience that she owes it only to her own pride and folly, a most imbittering consideration, and such as advances the affliction beyond that of a more innocent poverty, as much as the pain of an envenom'd arrow exceeds that of another.

22. But the saddest reckoning of all is that which she is to make to God, who has declar'd he hates robbery tho for a burnt-offering to himself. How will he then detest this robbery this impoverishing of the husband, when 'tis only to make an oblation to vanity and excess? It should therefore be the care of all wives to keep themselves from a guilt for which God and man, yea and themselves also shall equally accuse them, and to keep their expences within such limits, that as bees suck but do not violate

Or deface the flowers, so they as joint proprietaries with the husbands, may enjoy but not devour and destroy his fortune.

23. I have now run through the duties to be perform'd unto the Husband, wherein I have not used the exactness of a casuist in curiously anatomizing every part, and shewing all the most minute particulars reducible to each head. I have only drawn out the greater lines, and insisted on those wherein Wives are most frequently deficient. I shall only add this caution, that whatever is duty to the husband is equally so, he be good or ill, the Apostle commands the subjection and fidelity, even to heathen Husbands, *1 Pet. 3. 1. 2.* and tis not now their defect either in Piety or Morality, that can absolve the Wife. For, besides the inconvenience of making her duty precarious and liable to be subtracted upon every pretence of demerit, she has by solemn Contract renounc'd that liberty, and in her Marriage-vow taken him for better for worse; and it is too late *after Vows to make enquire*, *Prov. 20. 25.* to seek to break loose from the bond of her Soul; and how uneasy soever the perverseness of the husband may render it, he cannot thereby make it less, but more rewardable by God: for what the Apostle speaks in the case of Servants, is no less applicable to this, *1 Pet. 2. 19.* *for this is thank worthy, if for conscience toward God ye endure grief, suffering wrongfully.* Whatever duty is perform'd to Man with aspect on God, he owns it as to himself; so that how unworthy soever the husband may be, the Wife cannot misplace her observance, whilst she finally terminates it on that infinit Goodness and Majesty, to whom no love or obedience can be enough.

24. From this relation of a Wife, there ordinarily springs another, that of a Mother, to which there belongs a distinct duty, which may be branched into many severals: but I shall at present only reduce them to two Heads, Love and Care. A Mother is a title of so much tenderness, that we find it borrowed by our common Dialect to express the most exuberant kindness; nay, even in Sacred Style it has the same use, and is often set as the highest example our weakness can comprehend of the Divine Compassions. So that Nature seems sufficiently to have secur'd the love of

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Mothers to their Children, without the aid of any positive Law; yet we find this (as other Instincts of Nature) is sometimes violated, and oftner perverted and applied to mistaken purposes: the first is by a defect of Love; the other, by an imprudent excess of it: the defect does, I presume, more rarely occur then the other, yet it doth sometimes happen, and that either from a morose sowness of humor, or else from too vehement an intention on something else.

25. Some Women have such a ruggedness of nature, that they can love nothing; the ugly Passions of Anger and Envy, have, like *Pharoah's* lean Kine, eat up the more amiable, of Love and Joy. *Plato* was wont to advise crabbed austere tempers, to Sacrifice to the *Graces*; and such as these had need have a great deal of Christian Philosophy, to allay and sweeten their native Bitterness. But there are others that are not void of the affection of Love, but 'tis forestall'd by some other Object, and so diverted from their Children; and tis a little to be doubted, those Objects which so divert are none of the best, for the Wisdom of God has disposed all duty into such a Harmony and Consent of Parts, that one interferes not with another. If we love no prohibited thing, all the regular Objects of our kindness will agree well enough, and one need never supplant another. And indeed tis oft observable, that those Women who immoderately love their own Plesures, do least regard their Children; they look on them as Clogs to keep them within doors, and think their adverting to them, will hinder their free range abroad, those are turn'd off to the care of a Nurse or Maid whilst perhaps a Dog or a Monky is thought worthy their own attendance.

26. *Plutarch* relates it as a Sarcasm of *Cæsars* to some Forreigners whom he saw (at *Rome*) strangely fond of such little Animals, that he asked them whether the women in their Country had no children; thereby intimating, how unreasonable it was for those that had, to bestow their Caresses on such Creatures. And surely he would not have given a milder reprimand to some of our Ladies, who not only please, but pride themselves in those little Brutes, shew them to all commers, when perhaps you may converse with them divers dayes, before you shall,

shall, by any mention of theirs, know that they have a Child.

27. To this defect of Love, many are apt to impute the Mothers transferring the Nursing her Child to another. I am not forward to pronounce it, being loth to involve so many as I then must in the imputation of unnaturalness; I rather think it is taken up as a piece of State and Greatness; for no other motive, but what is founded in their Quality, could so universally prevail withal that are of it. But sure this is one of the vain Punctilio's wherewith this Age abounds; for what-ever rank the Mother is of, the Child carries proportion to it, and there is the same equality between the greatest Lady and her own Child, as is between the meanest Beggar and hers: tho' indeed if there were any condescension in it, the aversions of that ought not to outweigh the impulses of Nature, and the many advantages the Child may receive by taking its nourishment whence it derived its substance. And therefore, tho' I will not be too positive in asserting the necessity; yet I confess, I cannot but look with reverence upon those few Persons of Honor, who have broke through an unreasonableness, and preferred the good of their Children before that fantastic privilege of Greatness. And such must in all Justice be acknowledged to have given a much better evidence of their love to their Children, than the others.

28. There is in *A. Gellius*, in his fourteenth Book so fine a Discourse on this subject, where *Favorinus* the Philosopher is introduced, perswading a Noble Lady, notwithstanding the usual Excuses, to Nurse her Child; that nothing besides the length, could tempt me to omit the transcribing it: unless happily the little success, which a Noble Person of the same Sex here concern'd, I mean the Countess of *Lincoln*, in the *Ingenious* book wrote by her, and call'd her Nursery, be a sufficient ground of despairing to convince by any thing that can be said. However let these delicate ones consider the severe words of the Prophet, Lament. 4. 3. *The sea-monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones, the daughter of my people is become cruel like the Ostrich in the wilderness, who is hardened against her young*

young ones, as tho they were not hers : her labor is in vain without fear, because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding, Job. 39. 16.

29. But as there may be a fault in the defect, so there may be also in the excess of love. God is the only unlimited object of our love, towards all others 'tis easy to become inordinate, and in no instance more then in this of children. The love of a parent is descending, and all things move most violently downwards, so that whereas that of children to their parents commonly needs a spur, this of the parent often needs a bridle, especially that of the Mother, which (by strength of feminine passion) does usually exceed the love of the Father. Now to regulate this affection, she is to advert to the two rules, first that she hurt not her self by it, and secondly that she hurt not her children : of the first she is in danger if she suffer that human affection to swell beyond its banks so as to come in any competition with the Divine, this is to make an Idol of her child; for every thing is so to us, which rivals the love of God in our hearts, and he who owns the title of a jealous God, may be provoked as well by the bowing our souls to a living image, as the prostration of our bodies to a dead. Accordingly we oft see the effects of his jealousy in this particular, the doting affection of the mother is frequently punished with the untimely death of the Children; or if not with that 'tis many times with a severer scourge: they live (but as it was foretold to *Eli*. 1 *Sam.* 2. 33.) *to grieve her eyes and to consume her heart*, to be ruinous to themselves, and afflictions to their friends, and to force their unhappy mothers to that sad acclamation, *Lu.* 23. 29. *Blessed are the wombs which bare not.*

30. And as this proves often true, when the dotage is general upon all the children, so does oftner when 'tis more partial and fixt upon any one; that darling which she makes the only object of her joy usually becomes that of her sorrow. It is an ordinary infirmity in Parents to heap all their kindness upon one, to the defrauding of the rest, and too many times upon very undue motives: a little excelling in point of beauty turns the scales, when perhaps many more solid excellencies are the counterpoise. And
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surely this is not only unjust but irrational in the parent; for all the peculiarity of favor in superior, should be dispenc'd either by way of reward or encouragement; and neither of those ends can take place where 'tis only the outward-form that is considered, for that cannot be rewardable, to which the party has contributed nothing, and the Psalmist will tell us that tis God that hath made us and not we ourselves, *Psalm. 100. 2.* and as little room is there for the other end, that of encouragement. For as our Savior tells us, *Mat. 6.* none can add a cubit to his statute, nor make one hair white or black: 'tis certain themselves cannot really do either, tho by the aid of artificial hypocrisy they frequently appear to do both; but those are arts which neither deserve nor want encouragement, the natural beauty must have its encrease from the same source whence it derived its being: there is therefore no reasonable account to be given why a child should be prefer'd for any such exterior excellency.

31. The only justifiable ground of partiality to children is their virtue, for to that their own choice concurs, and so may intitle them to reward, and tis also in their power to advance, and so encouragements are not cast away upon them: nay the influences of those may extend farther, and provoke a vertuous emulation in the rest; but then the Mother must so manage it as to evidence that tis no inequality in her own inclination, but meerly the force of the others desert; not the person but the goodness, that biases her: and when vertu is known to be the only ingratiating quality, they will at once learn the way to become hers and Gods favourites. And unless it be upon this one design; tis a very unsafe thing for a parent to make any partial discrimination among children, which is sure to tempt the more neglected both to repine at her, and envy her darlings; and oftentimes such seeds of rancor have bin by that means sowed in children, as have bin hard to eradicate in their riper years. Nor is the mischief less which she does to her fondlings, who besides that they are expos'd to the malice of the rest, are usually spoild by it, made insolent and untractable, perhaps their whole lives after: for where the mothers affection is unbridled, commonly the childs will is

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so too, her fondness superseding that discipline and correction, which should, as the wise man speaks, *bow down its neck from its youth.*

37. And the like may be said where the indulgence is more universal to all the Children, which is in one respect worse than the partial, because it spoils more, not one or two but all the brood. The doting love of a mother blinds her eyes, that she cannot see their faults, manacles her hands that she cannot chastise them, and so their vices are permitted to grow up with themselves: as their joints knit and gather strength, so do their ill habits, till at last they are confirm'd into an obstinacy; so setting them in a perfect opposition to that pattern they should imitate, for as Christs childhood *increas'd in wisdom*, and the divine favor, *Luk. 2.* so do theirs in all those provoking follies, which may avert both the love of God and man. And alas what recompence can the little blandishments and caresses of a mother make her children, for such important such inestimable mischief? So that she that will be really kind, must temper her indulgence with a prudent severity, or else she eminently violates the second rule, by which she should regulate her love, and does that to her children, which *Jacob* fear'd from his father, *Gen. 27.* brings a curse upon them and not a blessing.

38. Indeed the best way of approving their love, is by well discharging the other branch of their duty, that of care; without this all the most passionate raptures of kindness, are but an airy apparition, a fantastic scene, and will no more advantage a child, then the whole shambles in picture can feed and nourish it. Now this care is not a temporary, momentary duty for some one critical instant, but is to attend the child through the several stages of its minority, *viz.* Infancy, childhood, and youth. The very first part of their infancy is a season only for those cares which concern their bodies, providing for their careful attendance; and all other things conducing to the strengthening their constitutions, and laying a foundation for future health and vigor; which is their interest not only upon a bodily, but upon an intellectual account, the good temperature of the body being a great aid towards the free
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operations of the mind. And therefore *Socrates* and other Philosophers much recommend to their disciples the care of health, as that which freed the soul from many incumbrances in its pursuit of knowledg : and it was the comprehensive prayer of the Poet, that the Gods would grant a sound mind in a healthful Body.

34. But this health is not alwayes the consequent of a very nice and tender breeding, but is very oft overthrown by it; and if Ladies could but find in their hearts to try it, they would, I doubt not, find, that the inuring them to moderate hardships, would much more conduce to the establishing and fortifying their constitutions.

35. Beyond all this, the care for their exterior is soon overtaken by a more important one, that of their interior, in the timing of which there seems to be a very common mistake in the World. We look upon the seven Years of infancy, as the life meerly of an Animal, to be spent only in the Entertainments of sense; and as we use not to yoke Calves, or back young Colts, so we think our children are for a while to be left at the same liberty; to have no restraint put on any of their Passions. Nay many times we excite and foment them, teach Children to be angry and envious, proud and sullen, as if we fear'd their Natural Propensions to all these were too faint, and wanted the help of Institutions. But surely this is a great and pernicious error, and this supposing Children to be so long Brutes, is the way to make them so longer. The Patrons of Atheism make it a most constant Topic in the disparagement of Religion, that is owed to the prejudices infused in the first infancy: 'twere to be wisht, that this Objection might so far be complied with, that the fear of God, the love of Vertue, and hatred of Vice, might have the first possession of the Soul; and they be made to moderate their Passions, as soon as they are in a capacity to have them excited and engaged.

36. And truly, if we will observe it, we may see very early dawnings of reason in Infants, which would sooner come to brightness, if we would betimes set to the scattering of those Passions which eclipse and darken it. A Child will quickly be taught to know what pleases or displeases

a Parent, and by a very little taste of reward or punishment, will learn to do the one, and avoid the other: and when this is done, the Parent has gained the fundamental Point, *That of Obedience*; and may superstruct on it what she pleases and then tis her fault if the child be not by easy and insensible degrees moulded into a right form. 'Tis at first all one to the Child, whether he name God in an Oath or in his Prayers; but a Mother by punishing the one, and rewarding the other, will quickly bring him to know there is a difference, and so proportionably in other instances. As to the way of Discipline, it may not be amiss to observe, that when there is occasion for severity, 'tis better to awe by actual punishment than terror, and never to make use of infinite and invisible affrightments the beloved methods of Nurses and Servants, such as are the menacing of Sprights and Momo's, and leaving in the dark that frequently make dastrardly and timorous impressions, which a long Age scarcely wear off.

37. A sober sense of things, is to be impressed by treatable means, and this will be done with most ease, both to the Parent and Child, the sooner tis set upon. The will of a tender Infant, is like its Limbs, supple and pliant, but time confirms it, and custom hardens it: so tis a cruel Indulgence to the poor Creature, to let it contract such habits, which must cost him so dear the breaking; or dearer, if never broken. And if this early care be taken of the Infancy, twill much ease the next part, that of the Childhood; for where the Iron sinew in the neck is broken where the native Stubborness is subdued so early, the yoke will sit ease, all succeeding parts of Discipline will come with more facility and profit. The care proper to this age is the instructing in all parts of useful Knowledge of which, as the Divine, for the Excellency both of its nature and its end, must be first ranked, so should it be first and most industriously cultivated, and by all endearing methods impress not only on the understanding, but the heart. Piety and Virtue should be propos'd as the most amiable as well as necessary things, and they would be invited not only to know, but love them.

38. This part of Learning is equally compe'ent to both
Sexes,

Sexes, and therefore, when the Sons are removed from under the Mothers tuition, and sent to more public places of erudition, her Province is still the same as to her Daughters, to whom she should not only Preach, but exemplify it in her own practice, no Precepts penetrating so much into Youth, as those that are so inforc'd. And in order to this, I should commend to Mothers, the being as much with them as they can, and taking the personal Inspection of them; not to turn them off wholly to Servants, no nor yet Governesses, but frequently themselves to examine how they proceed in the speculative part of Knowledge, and no less frequently exhort them to the practice.

39. *Marcus Cato* would not let his Son learn of his Slave, as disdaining a Child should owe so considerable benefit to so servile a person; and if he thought the meer teaching of Grammar, too great a charge for such a one, surely the whole Instruction of Youth is a much greater, it being that on which, not only a few outward Accomplishments, but even their Eternity depends. The great *Cornelia*, Mother of the *Gracchi*, and *Aurelia* the Mother of *Augustus*, thought it worth their pains to be Governesses. And the truth is, the Soul of a Child is a little too precious a Trust to commit wholly to the diligence and care of a mercenary servant; or if they do happen not to want those Qualifications, yet 'tis very possible they may Prudence, of which there is no small degree requisite to the Instructing of Youth, too great a remissness or severity being equally destructive in that affair. And indeed, besides this immediate, there are some other collateral Benefits consequent to the Mothers performing that Office, 'twill bring her and her Children into an intimacy and conversation, give her an acquaintance with their several Capacities and Humors; for want of which, many Parents have erred in their Conduct, one sort of Treatment being not fit for all Children; and the distinguishing that depending wholly on their discerning their particular Tempers, which cannot well be done without some converse with them.

40. Besides by this they will be witnesses how they dispose their time, that they neither lose it by doing nothing, nor yet mis-employ it by doing ill. And indeed there is
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scarce any part of the parents care more important then this, idleness being no farther removed from vice, then a cause is from its immediate effect, Therefore if children be permitted to trifle away their time, they will soon learn to trifle away their innocence also: so that 'tis highly necessary that they be provided of a succession of employments, that by the variety they may be insensibly drawn on: nay methinks, it might very well be contrived that their recreations might sometimes consist of such ingenious exercises, that they may at once both play and learn.

4th. There is yet another good effect of the Mothers presence with the children (which is perhaps no less material then any of the former) 'tis, that by the associating them with her self, she prevents the danger of worse society. Children, if the parents allow them not their company, are necessarily cast upon that of servants, than which there is scarce a greater danger that attends youth; for besides that, that low sort of converse debases their minds, makes them mean and sordid, it often corrupts their manners too, children usually not receiving more pernicious infusions from any than such Servants that desire to ingratiate themselves, and having no laudable quality whereby to do it, must first endeavour to ingratiate vice to them, and then by their officious Ministeries in that, have a ready way of introducing themselves into favor. Perhaps this will be thought to concern only the masculine part of children, and that the female who are commonly in a distinct apartment, and converse only with their own Sex, are more secure. But I would not advise mothers to depend too much on that, for they are no surer that their daughters shall not converse with men, nay men of the meaner sort too, then that their maids and attendants shall not do so, and when tis considered, how apt those are to entertain, if not to invite amours, tis not very probable the room where they quarter shall be inaccessible to those they affect. And it were much safer for children to be in the most public converse of men, than to be witnesses and observers of the private intrigues of such lovers; the memories of youth are very tenacious, and if they once be tainted with any indecent thing will be apt to recollect it, till at last perhaps they
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come to transcribe it. 'Tis therefore in this respect a very useful part of the Mothers care, to make her self company to her daughters, to prevent the dangers of a more unequal and infectious converse.

42. But if this be useful in childhood, 'tis no less then necessary in the next period of their time, when they arrive neer the growth and age of women; then indeed the mother should not only make them her companions, but her friends, allow them such a kind, yet modest, freedom, that they may have a complacence in her company, and not be tempted to seek it among their inferiors; that the belief of her kindness may supplant the pretensions: of those meaner sycophants, who by little flatteries endeavor to scru themselves into their good opinion, and become their confidents, then which there is nothing more mischievous, those private cabals that are held with such, serving only to render them mutinous against their parents, these family incendiaries like those in the State and Church, still inculcating the one grand principle of Liberty, a word so charming to our depraved nature, and especially to youth, that they should not be trusted with such Lectures. Besides those intimacies are often introductions to worse; many scandalous amours and unequal matches having had their rise from them. It should therefore be the business of Mothers to prevent all such pernicious leagues, by preingaging them in more safe familiarities, either with her self, or some other, of whose vertue she has reason to be confident.

43. But the most infallible security against this and all other mischiefs, is the bringing them into an intimacy and conversation with their maker, by fixing a true sense of Religion in their hearts, if that can be effectually done, 'twill supersede all other expedients. She that duly considers she is alwayes in Gods presence, will want no other inspector; nor will she much need monitors, who attends to the advices of her own conscience. Neither will it only tend to the securing her innocence but her reputation too; it being one part of the Christian Law to abstain from all appearance of evil, 1 Theff. 22. to do things that are of good report, Phil. 4. 8. so that piety is the one compleat armor to

to defend both their vertu and fame. And 'tis extremely necessary they should be furnisht with it, at this Age especially, when they do at first enter into the World, which we may well look on as a taking the Field, considering how many assaults they are there like to meet with; and if they go without this Armature, they may, none knows how soon, be incurably wounded, of which there want not many sad instances, some whereof might probably have bin prevented, had the Parent taken care to have better fortified them.

44. And indeed 'tis not a little sad to see how much this their most important concern is, neglected: many Mothers who are nicely curious in other parts of their daughters breeding, are utterly inconsiderate of this; they must have all civil Accomplishments, but no Christian. Those are excluded out of the scheme of Education, and by that means lye under the prejudice of being not only unnecessary, but ungentile, below the regard of Persons of Quality. 'Tis much to be feared, that this neglect toward their children, is founded in a previous contempt of Piety in themselves, yet I suppose 'tis often increas'd by a little Vanity they have of seeing them excel in some of those exterior qualities, which may recommend them to the humor of the World upon the improving whereof they are so intent, that more material things are overlookt; and when those are acquired, the pride of shewing them betrays them to other inconveniences. The Mother oft not only permits, but incites the daughter to the opportunities of boasting her excellencies sends her so oft abroad on that design, that at last perhaps she cannot when she would keep her at home, as I believe too many have found experimentally true. In a word, this Interval between Childhood and Majority, is the most Critical point of a Womans Life, and therefore should be the most nicely and warily attended, and a Mother had need summon not only all her care and diligence, but her prudence too, well to discharge this part of Obligation.

45. I shall not insist more minutely upon Particulars; I have in the former Section spoken somewhat of what 'tis fit these young Virgins should do and avoid, and whatever
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by that, or by any more exact rule appears their interest or duty; tis the Mothers to see it be not neglected by them: but where kindness alone will not prevail to employ their authority too; and by a d sreet mixture of each, secure their observance by both the tenures of Love and Reverence. Yet I shall a little reflect upon one particular I mentioned before, I mean that of Marrying where they have aversion, which tho I there charged as the crime of the daughter, yet I must here say the Original, and more inexcusable guilt is usually in the Parents, who are sometimes such Idolaters to Wealth and Honour, that they Sacrifice their Children to them; a more barbarous Immolation then that to *Molech*; for tho that were very inhuman, yet it had this alleviation, that the pain was short: but a soathed Bed is at once an acute and a lingering Torment, nay, not only so, but a temptation too, so that tis a Tyranny of a most unlimited kind, extends its effects even to Eternity: and sure that Mother must have very petrified bowels, have lost all natural compassion, that can so impose on her Child

46. I shall add no more concerning this relation of a Mother, but only one short advice, That those who groan under the frustration of their hopes, whose Children by any scandalous misbehaviour become Objects of their shame and grief, would soberly consider, whether it have not bin some way owing to themselves, either by neglect in their Education, or by their own ill Example: Tis usually one; and sometimes both. They that upon recollection can assure themselves tis neither, may bear the Affliction with much the greater cheerfulness; but they that cannot, I am sure ought to bear it with much the more patience, and submission, take it as Gods Lecture of Repentance, and look on their Childrens faults as the product of their own. And because Satisfaction is an indispensible part of Repentance, they are with their utmost industry to endavour the repairing those ruins they have made, by recalling th se to Virtue, who by their means have strai d from it. Tis true, the errors of Education like a subtle Povson, do somix with the Blood so incorporate into the Humors and Manners, that twill be very difficult to allay their effects, and the e

therefore the less they are themselves able to do towards it, the more earnestly they must importune a Higher Power. He who divided the Light from the Darkness, can separate the effects from the Causes; and as he restrained the natural property of Fire, in the case of the three Children, *Dan. 3.* so He only can rescue their Children from that destruction to which their negligence has exposed them. But as to the influence their Example has had they may do something towards the redress of that, by setting them a new Copy, making their own Change so visible, so remarkable that they may have the very same means of reclaiming, which there was of seducing them. And this is a piece of Justice, which seems to call aloud upon many Mothers. The irregularities of youth could hardly have grown to the present height, had they not received warmth and shelter from the practice of their Elders, which does at once give encouragement and take of restraints, the Mother loses not only her Authority, but her confidence to admonish or reprove. With what face can she require that strict and severe modesty of a young Girl, which she who should be a Matron will not practise? or tie up the giddy wandering humor of youth, within those bounds she thinks too strait for her own? and how ready a retortion will even Scripture it self afford for such an Imposure? *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* *Rom. 2. 21.* Let it therefore be the care of all Mothers to live a perpetual Lecture to their Children, so to exemplifie to them all Virtue and Piety, that they may contribute something to their Spiritual, as well as their natural life, that however they may at least deliver their own souls, and not have their childrens guilt recoil upon them as the unhappy Originals of it.

47. The last relation of a married woman is that of a Mistress, the inspection of the Family being usually her Province; and though she be not Supreme there, yet she is to improve her delegated authority to the advantage of all under it; and her more constant residence gives her more opportunities of it, then the frequent avocations of the husband will perhaps allow him. *St. Paul* sets it as the calling, and the indispensable duty of the Married women, *that they guide the House,* *1 Tim. 5. 18.* not thinking it a

point of greatness to remit the manage of all domestic concerns to a mercenary house-keeper. And indeed since it has bin a fashionable thing for the Master to resign up his concerns to the steward, and the Lady hers to the Governant, it has gone ill with most great Families, whilst these Officers serve themselves instead of those who employ them, raise fortunes on their Patrons ruins, and divide the spoil of the family, the house-keeper pilfering within doors, and the Bailiff plundering without.

48. Now to the well guiding of the house by the mistress of it, I know no better or more comprehensive rule, then for her to endeavor to make all th t are hers to be Gods servants also; this will secure her of all those intermedial qualifications in them in which her secular interest is concerned, their own consciences being the best spy she can set upon them, as to their truth and fidelity, and the best spur also to diligence and industry. But to the making them such, there will need first instruction, and secondly discipline. It is a necessary part of the rulers care to provide that none in their family should want means of necessary instruction. I do not say that the Mist^{esses} should set up for a catechist, or preacher; but that they take order they should be taught by those who are qualified for the employment. And that their furnishing them with knowledg. may not serve only to help them to a greater number of stripes, *Luk. 12. 47.* they are to give them the opportunies of consecrating it to prayer and devotion, to that end to have public divine offices in the family; and that not by starts or accidents (when a devouter guest is to be entertained, and laid by when a prophane) but daily and regularly, that the hours of prayers may be fixt and constant as those of meals, and (if it may possibly be) as much frequented; however that toward it she give both precept and example.

49. A Christian family should be the Epitomy of a Church; but alas now many among us lye under a perpetual Interdict, and yet not from the usurpation of any foreign power, but from the irreligion of the domestic. One may go into divers great families, and after some stay there, not be able to say that the name of God was mentioned to any other purpose than that of blasphemy and execration,

nor a text of scripture, unless in burlesque and prophane Drolery. And sure we need not wonder at the universal complaint that is now made of ill servants, when we reflect upon this ill government of families. They that are suffer'd wholly to forget their duties toward God, will not always remember it towards man. Servants are not such Philosophers, that upon the bare strength of a few moral instincts they will be vertuous: and if by a customary neglect of all things sacred, they are once taught to look at nothing beyond this world, they will often find temptation enough here to discard their honesty, as the most unthriving trade. And indeed when the awe of Religion is quite taken off from the vulgar, there will scarce any thing else be found to keep them within any tolerable bounds; so that 'tis no less impolitic then prophane to slacken that reine.

50. But it is not only the interest, but the duty of all that have families, to keep up the esteem and practice of Religion in them. 'Twas one of the greatest endearments of *Abraham* to God, that he would command his household to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19. And *Foshua* undertakes no less for the piety of his household then himself, as for me and my house we will serve the Lord, Jos. 24. 15. And sure 'tis but reasonable, that where we our selves owe an homage, we should make all our dependents acknowledg the same. Besides, it is a justice in respect of them; for where we entertain a servant, we take the whole person into our care and protection, and are false to that undertaking if we suffer his soul the most precious part of him to perish; and God who keeps account even of his meanest creatures, will not patiently resent such a neglect of those who bear his own image, and were ransomed with as great a price as their Masters were, for there is no respect of persons with God, Eph. 6. 6.

51. But when Piety is planted in a family, 'twill soon wither, if it be not kept in vigor by Discipline: nay indeed, to have servants seemingly devout in the oratory, and yet really licentious out of it, is but to convert ones house into a Theater, have a play of religion, and keep a set of actors only to personate and represent it. 'Tis therefore necessary to inquire how they behave themselves when

they are off the Stage, whether those hands which they elevate in prayer, are at other times industriously applyed to works; or those mouths wherewith they there bless God, are not elsewhere filled with oaths and curses, scurrilities and revilings; in a word, whether that form of Godliness be not design'd in commutation for sobriety and honesty. Indeed the governours of families ought to make a strict inspection into the manners of their servants, & where they find them good to affix some special mark of favour, by which they may both be encouraged to persevere and others to begin; but where they discern them vicious there as eminently to discountenance, severely to admonish them, and use all fit means for their reclaiming, and when that seems hopeless, to dismiss them that they may not infect the rest. *A little leaven saith the Apostle leaveneth the whole lump, Gal. 5. 9.* and one ill servant (like a perisht tooth) will be apt to corrupt his fellows. 'Tis therefore the same in families that it is in more public communities, where severity to the ill is mercy and protection to the rest; and where houses thus early weeded of all idle and vicious persons, they would not be so overgrown, nor degenerat into such rude wildernes, as many (nay I fear most) great families now are.

32. But as servants are not to be tolerated in the neglect of their duty, so neither are they to be defeated of any of their dues. [Masters are to give to their servants that which is just and equal, Col. 4. 1. And sure, 'tis but just and equal that they who are rational creatures should not be treated with the rigor or contempt of brutes: a sufficient decent provision, both in sickness and in health, is a just debt to them, besides an exact performance of those particular contracts upon which they are entertained. *Laban* had so much of Natural justice, that he would not take the advantage of *Jacobs* relation to him, to make him serve him gratis. *Because thou art my brother shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought? tel me therefore what shall thy wages be? Gen. 29. 15.* But alas now a daies where servants have been told, nay expressly articted for their wages, 'tis with many no easy thing to get it: nay 'tis thought by some Masters an insolence, a peize of ill manners to demand it, and when they have

have worn out a servant, they either pay him not at all, or with the same protraction and regret, which they do their Tailors for the old cloths they have cast off. I fear there are many instances of this, especially among great persons, it being a received mode with too many of them to pay no debts to those who are too mean to contest with them. But however they may ruffle it out with men, it will one day arraign them before God as most injurious oppressors; there being no crime of that kind more frequently or severely branded in Scripture, than this of detention of the wages of the servant and hirelings. Besides, this example of injustice, wherein the servant is passive, is often transcribed by him in acts of fraud and deceit, and he is apt to think it but an equal retaliation, to break his trust where the Master breaks his covenant, and when he once attempts to be his own pay-master, 'tis not to be doubted but he will allow himself large use for the forbearance of his wages; so that the course is no less unprofitable to the Master than unjust and dishonourable.

53. I am not sure 'tis always in the Wives power to prevent this or any of the former faults in the menage of the family. For her authority being but subordinate, if the Husband who is supreme suspend her power, he does by that vacating her rule take off the duty consequent to it; so that what I have said can be obligatory to none that are so impeded: butto those who either can do it themselves, or perswade their Husbands to it, the omission will be their sin, all the prophaneness and disorder of the family will be charged upon their account, if it came by their default.

54. And this methinks is a consideration that may much mortify one usual piece of vanity, I mean that of a multitude of servants. We shall all of us find burden enough of our own personal miscarriages, and need not contrive to fetch in more weight from others. And in families 'tis generally observable, that the bigger they are the worse; vice gains boldness by numbers, is hatcht up by the warmth of a full society; and we daily see people venture upon those enormities in consort and in a croud, which they would not dare did they think they stood single. Besides

the wider the Province is, the more difficult it is well to administer it; and in a heap of servants many faults will scape undiscern'd: especially, considering the common confederacy there is usually among them, for the eluding of discipline: so that what the wise man speaks of not desiring a multitude of unprofitable children, I think may be very well applied to servants, whose unprofitableness usually increases together with their number. I have now run through these several obligations consequent to the married state, wherein even upon this very cursory view, there appears so many particulars, that if they were all duly attended, Ladies need not be much at a loss how to entertain themselves, nor run abroad in a Romantic quest after forreign divertisements, when they have such variety of engagements at home.

SECT. III.

Of Widows.

1. **T**HE next state which can succeed to that of Marriage is Widowhood, which tho it supersedes those duties which were terminated meerly in the person of the husband, yet it endears those which may be paid to his ashes. *Love is strong as death*, Cant. 8. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine cannot be extinguish'd by it, but burns like the funeral Lamps of old, even in vaults and charnel-houses. the conjugal love transplanted into the grave (as into a finer mould) improves into piety, and layes a kind of sacred obligation upon the widow to perform all offices of respect and kindness which his Remains are capable of.

2. Now those Remains are of three sorts, his body, his memory, and his children. The most proper expression of her love to the first, is in giving it an honorable Enterment; I mean not such as may vye with the Poland extravagance

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(of which tis observed that two or three neer succeeding funerals ruin the family) but prudently proportion'd to his quality and fortune, so that her zeal to his Corps may not injure a nobler relique of him, his Children. And this decency is a much better instance of her kindness, then all those Tragical Furies wherewith some Women seem transported towards their dear Husbands, those frantick Embraces and caresses of a Carcase, which betray a little too much the sensuality of their Love. And it is something observable, that those vehement Passions quickly exhaust themselves, and by a kind of Sympathetic Efficacy as the Body (on which their affection was fixt) moulders, so does that also; nay often it attends not those lesurely degrees of dissolution, but by a more precipitate motion seems rather to vanish then consume.

3. The more valuable kindness therefore, is that to his Memory, endeavoring to embalm that, keep it from perishing; and by this innocent Magic (as the Egyptians were wont by a more guile) she may converse with the dead, represent him so to her own thoughts, that his life may still be repeated to her: and as in a broken Mirror the refraction multiplies the Images, so by his dissolution every hour presents distinct Ideas of him; so that she sees him the oftner, for his being hid from her eyes. But as they use not to Embalm without Odors, so she is not only to preserve, but perfume his Memory, render it as fragrant as she can, not only to her self but others; by reviving the remembrance of what-ever was praise-worthy in him, vindicating him from all calumnies and false accusations, and kissing (or allaying) even true ones as much as she can. And indeed, a widow can no way better provide for her own honor, then by this tenderness of her Husbands.

4. Yet there is another expression of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is, the setting such a value upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it. *Twas the dying charge of *Augustus* to his Wife *Livia*, *Behave thy self well, and remember our Marriage.* And she who has bin Wife to a Person of Honor, must so remember it as not to do any thing below her self, or which he (could he have foreseen it) should justly have bin ashamed of.

5. The last Tribute she can pay him is in his children. These he leaves as his Proxies to receive that kindness of which himself is incapable; so that the Children of a Widow may claim a double portion of the Mothers love, one upon their Native right, as hers; the other, as a bequest in right of their dead Father. And indeed since she is to supply the place of both Parents; tis but necessary she should put on the affection of both, and to the tenderness of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. First, in a sedulous care of their Education: and next, in a prudent managery of their Fortune; an order that is sometimes unhappily inverted, and Mothers are so concerned to have the Estate prosper in their tuition, that the Children cannot; whilst (by an unseasonable frugality) to save a little expence, they deny them the advantages of an Ingenious and Gentile Breeding, swell their Estates perhaps to a vast bulk, but so contract and narrow their minds, that they know not how to dispose them to any real benefit of themselves or others. And this is one of the most pernicious Parsimonies imaginable, a Mother by this seems to adopt the Fortune, and abdicate the Child, who is only made the Beast to bear those loads of Wealth she will lay on and which she evidently owns as the greatest Treasure, since in tenderness to that she neglects him.

6. Yet sometimes the same Effect springs from another Cause, and Children are ill bred, not because the Mother grudges the charge, but out of a Feminine fondness, which permits her not to part with them to the proper places for their education; like *Jacob to Benjamin*, her Soul is so bound up in them, that she cannot lend them a while even to their own most necessary concerns; and in this, tho not so ignoble a motive as the other, is of no less mischief, at least to her Sons, who being by it confined to home are consequently condemned to be poisoned (if with nothing else, yet) with the flatteries of Servants and Tenants who think those the best expedient to secure their own station. And with these the young Master or Landlord is so blown up, that as if his Manors were the confines of the World, he can look at nothing beyond them; so that when at last he breaks loose from his Mothers arms, and comes abroad,

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he expects scarce to find his Equals, much less his Betters thinks he is still to receive the same fawning Adorations which he was used to at home : and being possess'd with this insolent expectation, he will scarce be undeceived, but at the price of many Affronts ; nay perhaps he may buy his experience with the loss of his life ; by his ill manners draw on a Quarrel, wherein he finally perishes. That this is no impossible Supposition, some unhappy Mothers have found to their unspeakable affliction.

7. 'Tis not to be denied, but there are also dangers consequent to the breeding Children abroad, Vice having insinuated it self even into the places of Erudition, and having not only as many, but the very same Academies with Vertu and Learning ; so that the extreme depravation of the times new states the Question, and we are not to consider which is best, but which is the least ill dispose of Children. And in that competition sure the home Education will be cast ; for there they may suck in all the Venom, and nothing of the Antidote ; they will not only be taught base things, but (as I before observed) by the basest Tutors, such as will add all the most sordid circumstances to the improving of a Crime. Whereas abroad they are first not like to meet with any whose interest it is so much to make them Vicious : And secondly, they may (as ill as the world is) meet with many who may give them both Precepts and Examples of a better kind. Besides, the Discipline used in those Communities make them know themselves ; and the various sorts of Learning they may acquire, will not only prove useful divertisement (the want of which is the great spring of mischief) but will, if rightly apply'd furnish them with Ingenious and Vertuous principles, such as may set them above all vile and ignoble practices. So that there seems a conspiracy of motives to wrest the child from the reluctant mother ; and to persuade her for a while to deny her self that desire of her eyes, that so he may at last answer the more rational desire of her heart.

8. As to the other part of her obligation, the managing of their fortune, there is the same rule for her as for all other persons that have a Trust, *viz.* to do as for themselves; that is, with the same care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own peculiar concern. I do not say that she shall confound the property, and make it indeed her own by applying it to her particular use. A thing I fear which is too often done, especially by the gayer sort of widows, who to keep up their own equipage, do sometimes inroach upon their sons peculiar, and I with even that (tho bad enough) were the only case wherein it were done. But 'tis sometimes to make her a better prize to a second husband: she goes into another family, and as if she were a Colony sent out by her son, he must pay for the planting her there; indeed the oft repeating this injury, has advanc't it now into a custom, and the management of the minors estate is reckon'd on as part of the widows fortune. But I confess I see not what there is in the title of a mother, that can legitimate her defrauding her child, it rather envenoms the crime and adds unnaturalness to deceit. Besides 'tis a preposterous sort of guilt. Orphans and Widows are in Scripture link't together as objects of Gods and good mens pitty, and of ill mens oppression, and how ill alas does civil war look among fellow sufferers; the Widow to injure the orphan is like that uncouth oppression Solomon speaks of *Prov. 28. 3. A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such kind of rapins are as excessive in their degree as prodigious in their kind, and I believe there are many instances of sons, who have suffer'd more by the guardianship of their Mothers, then they could probably have done by the outrage of Strangers.

9. How well such Mothers answer their obligations to their dead Husbands, I must leave it to their own consciences to discuss: I shall only offer them these steps of gradation by which to proceed. First, that injustice of any sort is a great sin; secondly that when 'tis in a matter of trust 'tis complicated with treachery also, thirdly that of all trusts those to the dead have alwayes bin esteem'd the most sacred: if they can find any allay to these by the two remain-

remaining circumstances, that 'tis the trust of a husband, and the interest of a child, I shall confess them very subtil casuists.

10. I have hitherto spoke of what the widow owes to her dead husband; but there is also somewhat of peculiar obligation in relation to her self. God who has placed us in this World to pursue the interests of a better, directs all the signal acts of his providence to that end; and intends we should so interpret them. So that every great change that occurs, is design'd either to recal us from a wrong way, or to quicken our pace in the right; and a widow may more then conjecture, that when God takes away the mate of her bosome, reduces her to a solitude, he does by it sound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gayeties of the world. And as in compliance with civil custom she immures herself, sits in darkness for a while; so she should put on a more retir'd temper of mind a more strict and severe behavior, and that not to be cast off with her veil, but to be the constant dress of her widowhood. Indeed that state as it requires a great sobriety and piety, so it affords many advantages towards it: the Apostle tells us, *that she who is married careth for the things of the World how she may please her husband*, 1 Cor. 7. 34. There are many things which are but the due compliances of a wife, which yet are great avocations, and interruptors of a strict devotion; when she is manumitted, from that subjection, when she has less of *Martha's care of serving*, she is then at liberty to chuse *Mary's part*, Luk. 10. 42. She has her time and her fortune at her own command; and consequently may much more abound in the works both of piety and charity. We find God himself retrench the wives power of binding her own soul, Num. 30. Her vows were totally insignificant without her husbands confirmation; but the widow might devote her self to what degree she pleas'd, her piety has no restraint from any other inconsistent obligation; but may swell as high as it can. Those hours which were before her husbands right, seem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor of our time, that discourse and free converse wherewith she entertain'd him, she may now convert into colloquies and spiritual entercourse with her maker; and

that love which was only human before, by the change of its object acquires a sublimity, is exalted into divine; from loyal duty and conjugal affection becomes the eternal work and happiness of Angels the ardor of a Cherubim. Thus may she in a higher sense verify *Sampsons* riddle, *Judg.* 14. *fetch honey out of a carkasse*, make her husbands *Alhes* (like those of the Heifer under the Law, *Heb.* 9. 13.) her *Purification*; his corruption may help to put on incorruption, and her loss of a temporary comfort may instate her in an eternal.

11. And as her self so her fortune may also be consecrated; and indeed if she be, that will also. If she have made an escape out of *Egypt*, there shall not a hoof be left behind her, *Exod.* 10. 26. No part of her possessions will be assign'd to vanity and excess. She who hath really devoted her self to Piety, *fasted and prayed with Anna*, *Luk.* 2. 27. will also be full of good works and alms-deeds with *Tabitha*, *Act.* 9. 36. Thus she may be a mother when she ceases to bear; and tho she no more increase one family, she may support many; and certainly the fertility of the womb, is not so valuable as this of the bowels. Fruitfulness can be but a happiness, Compassion is a vertue. Nay indeed 'tis a greater and more certain happiness, a child is not brought forth out with pangs and anguish, but a work of mercy is produced not only with ease, but delight. Besides, she that bears a Child; knows not whether it may prove a Blessing or a curse; but Charity gives certain title to a Blessing, and engages the most solvent Paymaster, even God himself, who owns all such disbursements as a loan to himself. *He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: and that which he hath given will he pay him again*, *Prov.* 19. 17.

12. There was in the Primitive Times an Ecclesiastical Order of Widows, which *St. Paul* mentions, *1 Tim.* 5. whose whole Ministry was devoted to Charity. They were indeed of the poorer sort, fit rather to receive than give Alms; yet the less they could do with their Purses, the more was required of their Persons, the humbler offices of *washing the Saints feet*, the careful task of *bringing up children*, and a diligent attendance on every good work, And sure there is parity of Reason, that those who upon the score

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of their Wealth, exempt themselves from those Laborious Services, should commute for it by more Liberal Alms. In the warmth and zeal of Christianity, Women of the highest Quality performed both sorts of Charity, forgot their Greatness in their condescensions, yet assumed it again in their bounty; founded Hospitals, and yet with a *labor of love*, as the Apostle styles it, *Heb. 6. 10.* disdain'd not sometimes to serve in them. But these are Examples not like to be transcribed in our dayes, Greatness is now grown to such an unweildiness, that it cannot stoop tho to the most Children offices, and yet can as little soar up in any Munificent Charities: it stands like *Nebuchadnezzars* Golden Image, a vast Bulk only to be ador'd.

13. Now certainly, if any Women be qualified to avert this reproch, it must be the Dowagers of great Families and Fortunes, they have none to controul their Visits to the sick and afflicted, or to resent a disparagement from their humility, neither have they an account to give of their Possessions to any but God and themselves; to him sure they can bring none so like to procure them the Eulogy of *well done thou good and faithful servant*, *Math. 25. 21.* as a Catalogue of their Alms. Nor indeed can they any other way dispose their Fortune so much to their own contentment; they may indeed cloy and satiate their senses, make provision for the flesh; but that no way satisfies their reason, much less their Conscience. The Soul, which is the superior part, is quite left out in that distribution, nothing is communicated to it but the guilt of those dear bought Excesses. The only way it has to be a sharer in their Wealth, is by a charitable dispensing. The Poor are its Proxies as well as Gods, and tho in all other respects we may say to the Soul, as the *Psalmist* does to God, *Ps. 16. 2. my goods extend not unto thee*: yet by this way, it becomes not only a partaker, but the chief proprietor, and all is laid out for its use. The harboring an out-cast, builds it *an everlasting habitation*, *Lu. 16. 9.* The clothing the naked, arrays it in *pure white linnen*, *Rev. 19. 8.* and the feeding the hungry, makes it a guest *at the supper of the Lamb*, *v. 9.* nay it gains not only an indefeisible title to these happy Reversions, but it has a great deal in present possession, a huge rational

rational Complacency in the right applying of Wealth, and doing that with it for which 'twas design'd yet more, it gives a sensitive delight, nothing being more agreeable to human nature, than the doing good to its own kind. A seasonable Alms leaves a greater exaltation and transport in the Giver, than it can ordinarily raise in the Receiver; so exemplifying the Maxim of our Blessed Lord, that it is *a more blessed thing to give than to receive*, Act. 20. 35. This indeed is a way to elude the severe denuntiation of the Apostle, 1 Tim. 5. 6. *A widow that liveth in this pleasure, is not dead whilst she liveth*; but on the contrary, shall live when she dies; when she resigns her Breath, shall improve her being; the Prayers of the poor, like a benign gale, shall assist her flight to the Region of Bliss; and she who has here cherish'd the afflicted Members, shall there be indissolubly united to their Glorious Head.

14. And now methinks Widow-hood, under this aspect, is quite transform'd, is not so forlorn, so desolate an estate as tis usually esteem'd. And would all Widows use but this expedient, thus devote themselves to Piety and Charity, it would, like the healing Tree, Exod. 15. 25. sweeten the Waters of *Marah*, render the condition not only supportable, but pleasant; and they would not need to make such affrighted, such disadvantageous escapes, as many do, from it. 'Tis true, the Apostles affirmation is unquestionable, that *the wife when her husband is dead, is at liberty to be married to whom she will*, 1 Cor. 7. 39. But the advice he subjoins is authentic too, *she is happier if she so abide*. She that may solace her self in the Society, in the Love of her God, makes an ignoble descent to Human Embraces; she that may purchase Heaven with her Wealth, buys a very dear Bargain of the best Husband on Earth; nay indeed, upon a meer secular account, it seems not very prudent to relinquish both Liberty and Property, to Espouse at the best a Subjection, but perhaps a Slavery, it a little resembles the mad Frolicks of freed Gally-slaves, who play away their Liberty as soon as they regain it.

15. Marriage is so great an Adventure, that once seems enough for the whole life; for whether they have bin prosperous or adverse in the first, it does almost discourage a
second

second attempt. She that has had a good Husband, may be suppos'd to have his Idea so fixt in her Heart, that it will be hard to introduce any new Form: nay farther, she may very reasonably doubt, that in this common dearth of Vertue, two good Husbands will scarce fall to one Womans share, and an ill one will become more intolerable to her, by the reflections she will be apt to make on the better. On the other side, if she have had a bad, the smart sure cannot but remain after the rod is taken off; the memory of what she has suffered, should methinks, be a competent caution against new adventures. Yet experience shews us that women (tho the weaker sex) have commonly fortitude enough to encounter and baffle all these considerations. It is not therefore to be expected that many will by any thing that hath or can be said be diverted from remarrying: and indeed she that does not preserve her widowhood upon the accounts fore-mentioned, may perhaps better relinquish it. St. Paul we see advises that those Widows who found no better employment *then going from house to house,* that grew by their vacancy to be *tailors and busy bodies,* 1 Tim. 5. 13. should marry again; it being the best way to fix these wandring planets, to find them business of their own at home, that so they may not ramble abroad to intermeddle with that of others. And the truth is they that cannot brook the retiredness and gravity which becomes a widow, had better put themselves in a state that less requires it; and, if they resolve not to conform their minds to their condition, to bring their condition to their minds; but in the doing that there will be some cautions very necessary to be observed. I shall reduce them to two, the one relating to the times, the other to the equality of the match.

16. First in respect of time, common decency requires that there be a considerable interval between the parting with one husband and the chusing another. This has bin so much observed by nations that were at all civiliz'd. that we find *Numa* made it a law, that no widow should marry under 10. months, and if any did, she was to sacrifice as for the expiation of a crime; and this continued in force many ages after, in so much that when upon reasons of state

Augustus

Augustus found it useful to marry his sister *Octavia* to *Antony*, nothing less than a decree of the Senate could license the anticipating the time; so zealous observers were they of this point of Civility, that they thought the whole state was concerned in the violation. 'Tis true we have no law in the case, but we have somewhat of custom, I know not how long we shall have; since the frequent breaches of it threaten quite to cancel it: yet a woman that is tender of her honour will scarce give her example towards the rescinding it. The wounds of grief are seldom heal'd by any hand but that of time, and therefore too sudden a cure shews the hurt pierced not deep; and she that can make her mourning veil an optic to draw a new lover neerer to her sight, gives cause to suspect the fables were all without.

17. The next thing considerable is the equality of the match. Marriage is so close a link, that to have it easy 'tis good to have the parties as even proportioned as may be. And first in respect of quality and fortune, 'tis to be wish'd there should be no eminent disproportion. Those that meet most upon a level, are least subject to those upbraidings that often attend a great descent of either party, it is therefore no prudent motive, by which some Widows are swaid, who marry only for a great title; who often do not meet with so much of obeisance from strangers, as they do with contempt from their husbands and his relations. There have bin many examples of Lords, who have used rich, but inferior, widows like sponges, squeez'd them to fill themselves with their Wealth, and them only with the air of a big name. On the other side for a woman to marry very meanly and too much below her self is rather worse; those kind of matches are ordinarily made in a transport of passion, and when that abates and leaves her to sober reflections, she will probably be so angry with her self, that she will scarce be well pleased with her husband. A state of subjection is a little sweetned by the worth and dignity of the Ruler: for as it is more honorable, so 'tis also more easy, the servile spirit being of all others the most imperious in command. And sure 'twill not a little grate a woman of honor to think she has made such a one her Master, who perhaps would
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before have thought it a preferment to have bin her servant. Nay farther, such marriages have commonly an ill reflection on the modesty of the Woman, it being usually presum'd that where the distance was so great, as to discourage such an attempt on his part, there was some invitation on hers. So that upon all accounts she is very forlorn who thus disposes of her self: yet 'tis too well known such matches have oft bin made, and the same levity and inconsideration may betray others to it; and therefore 'tis their concern well to ballast their minds and to provide that their passion never get the ascendant over their reason.

18. Another very necessary equality is that of their judgment as to Religion. I do not mean that they are to catechize each other as to every minute speculative point; but that they be of the same profession, so as to join together in the worship of God. It is sure very uncomfortable that those who have so closely combin'd all their other interests, should be dis-united in the greatest; that one Church cannot hold them, whom one house, one bed does; and that religion which is in it self the most uniting thing should be the only disagreement between them. I know tis oft made a compact in such matches, that neither shall impose their opinion upon the other: yet I doubt tis seldom kept, unless it be by those whose carelessness of all religion abates their zeal to any one, But where they have any earnestness in their way, especially where one party thinks the other in a damnable error, 'twill scarce be possible to refrain endeavoring to reduce them; and that endeavor begets disputes, those disputes heats, those heats disgusts, and those disgusts perhaps end in aversion; so that at last their affections grow as unreconcilable as their opinions, and their religious jars draw on domestic. Besides, if none of these personal debates happen, yet the education of the childrea will be matter of dispute; the one parent will still be countermining the other, each seeking to recover the others proselytes. Nay it introduces faction into the inferior parts of the family too: the servants, according to their different persuasions bandy into leagues and parties; so that in endangers, if not utterly destroys

destroyes all concord in families: and all this train of mischiefs, should methinks be a competent prejudice against such matches.

19. There is yet a third particular wherein any great disproportion is much to be avoided, and that is in Years. The humors of youth and age differ so widely, that there had need be a great deal of skill to compose the discord into a harmony, When a young woman marries an old man, there are commonly jealousies on the one part and loathing on the other; and if there be not an eminent degree of discretion in one or both, there will be perpetual disagreements. But this is a case that does not often happen among those I now speak to: for tho the avarice of Parents sometimes forces maids upon such matches, yet widows who are their own choosers seldom make such elections. The inequality among them commonly falls on the other side, and old women marry young men. Indeed any marriage is in such a folly and dotage, they who must suddenly make their beds in the dust, what should they think of a nuptial couch? And to such the answer of the Philosopher is apposite, who being demanded what was the fittest time for marrying, replying: For the young not yet, for the old not at all.

20. But this dotage becomes perfect frenzy and madness when they choose young husbands: this is an accumulation of absurdities and contradictions. The husband and the Wife are but one person; and yet at once young and old, fresh and wither'd. 'Tis a reversing the decrees of nature, and therefore 'twas no ill answer which *Dionysius* the Tyrant gave his mother, who in her age design'd such a match, that tho by his regal power he could dispense with positive laws, yet he could not abrogate those of nature or make it fit for her an old woman to marry a young man. 'Tis indeed an inversion of seasons, a confounding the Kalendar, making a mungrel month on *May* and *December* and the conjunction proves as fatal as it is prodigious; being scarce ever seen that such a match proves tolerably happy. And indeed 'tis not imaginable how it should; for first 'tis to be presum'd she that marries so must marry meanly, no young man who does not need her fortune will

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take her person. For tho some have the humor to give great rates for inanimate antiquities, yet none will take the living *gratis*. Next she never misses to be hated by him she marries: he looks on her as his rack and torment, thinks himself under the lingring torture devis'd by *Mezentius*, a living body tied to a dead. Nor must she think to cure this by any the little adulteries of art: she may buy beauty, yet can never make it her own; may paint, yet never be fair. 'Tis like enameling a mud wall, the coarseness of the ground will spoil the varnish and the greatest exquisiteness of dress serves but to illustrate her native blemishes. So that all she gains by this is to make him scorn as well as abhor her.

21. Indeed there is nothing can be more ridiculous, than an old Woman gaily set out; and it was not unaptly said of *Diogenes* to such a one, If this decking be for the living, you are deceived; if for the dead make hast to them: and I doubt many young husbands will be ready to say as much. Nay because death comes not quick enough to part them, there is few have patience to attend its loitering pace: the man bids adieu to the Wife tho not to her fortune takes that to maintain his luxuries else-where, allows her some little annuity, and makes her a pensioner to her own estate. So that he has his design, but she none of hers; he married for her fortune, and he has it; she for his person, and has it not: and which is worse, buyes her defeat with the lose of all; he commonly leaving her as empty of mony as he found her of wit.

22. And truly this is a condition deplorable enough, and yet usually fails even of that comfort which is the last reserve of the miserable, I mean Pitty. 'Tis the Wise mans question, *Ecclus. 12. 13. Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a Serpent?* he might have presumed less on his skill, and kept himself at a safer distance; and sure the like may be said of her. Alas, what are her feeble charms, that she should expect by them to fix the giddy appetites of youth? And since she could so presume without sense, none will regret that she could be convinc'd by smart. Besides, this is a case wherein there have bin a multitude of unhappy Presidents which might have caution'd her. He that acciden-

dentally falls down and undiscovered precipice is compassionate for his disaster, but he that stands a great while on the brink of it, looks down and sees the bottom strew'd with the mangled carcasses of many that have thence fallen; if he shall deliberately cast himself into their company, the blame quite extinguishes the pity, he may astonish, but not melt the beholders. And truly she who casts her self away in such a match, betrays not less but more wilfulness. How many ruines of unhappy women present themselves to her, like the wrecks of old vessels, all split upon this rock? And if she will needs steer her course purposely to do the same, none ought to grudge her the shipwrack she so Courts.

23. Nor only has she this negative discomfort to be deprived of pity, but she is loaded with censures and reproch, The World is apt enough to malicious errors, to fix blame where there is none, but 'tis seldom guilty of the charitable, does not overlook the smallest appearance of evil, but generally puts the worst construction on any act, that it will with any probability bear; and according to that measure women in this condition can expect no very mild descant on them. Indeed such matches are so destitute of any rational Plea, that 'tis hard to derive them from any other motive then the sensitive. What the common conjectures are in that case, is as needless as it is unhandful to declare: I will not say how true they are, but if they be, it adds another reason to the former, why such marriages are so improsperous. All distortions in Nature are usually ominous; and such such perternatural heats in Age, may very well be reckoned as dismal Presages, and very certain ones too, since they create the ruine they foretell. And truly 'tis not only just, but convenient, that such motives should be attended with such Consequences; that the Bitterness of the one may occasion some reflection on the Sordidness of the other. 'Tis but kindly, that such an *Alballowide* Spring should meet with Frosts, and the unpleasantness of event chastise the ugliness of the Design; and therefore I think those that are conscious of the one, should be so far from murmuring, that they should be very thankful for the other; think it Gods discipline to bring them again to their

Wits.

Wits, and not repine at that smart which themselves have made necessary.

24. And now I wish all the Ancienter Widows, would seriously weigh how much 'tis their Interest not to sever those two Epithets; that of Ancient they cannot put off, it daily grows upon them; and that of Widow is sure a more proportionable adjunct to it, then that of Wife; especially when it is to one whom her Age might have made her Mother. There is a Veneration due to Age, if it be such as disowns not it self: *The Hoary head*, says *Solomon*, *is a Crown of Glory if it be found in the way of Righteousness*, Prov. 16. 32. but when it will mix it self with Youth, it is disclaimed by both, becomes the shame of the Old, and the scorn of the Young. What a strange fury is it then which possesses such Women, that when they may dispose their Fortunes to those advantageous Designs before mentioned, they should only buy with them, so undecent, so ridiculous a slavery? that when they may keep up the reputation of Modesty and Prudence, they should expose themselves to an Universal Contempt for the want of both; and that they who might have had a reverence, put themselves even out of the capacity of bare compassion.

25. This is so high a Frenzy, as sure cannot happen in an instant; it must have some preparatory degrees, some rooting in the constitution and habit of the mind: such Widows have sure some lightness of humor, before they can be so giddy in their Brains, and therefore those that will secure themselves from the Effect, must substract the Cause; if they will still be wishing themselves young, 'tis odds but within a while they will perswade themselves they are so. Let them therefore content themselves to be old, and as Fashions are varied with Times, so let them put on the Ornaments proper to their Season; which are Piety, Gravity, and Prudence. These will be not only their ornament but their Armor too; this will gain them such a Reverence, that will make it as improbable they should be assaulted, as impossible they should assault. For I think one may safely say, It is the want of one or all of these, which betraies Women to so much Marriages.

26. And indeed it may be a matter of Caution, even to the younger Widows, not to let themselves too much loose to a light frolic humor, which perhaps they will not be able to put off, when it is most necessary they should. It will not much invite a sober Man to marry them while they are young; and if it continue with them till they are old, it may (as natural Motions use) grow more violent towards its end: precipitate them into that ruinous Folly we have before considered. Yet, should they happen to scape that, should it not force them from their Widowhood, it will sure very ill agree with it: for how preposterous is it for an Old Woman to delight in Gauds and Trifles, such as were fitter to entertain her grand-children? to read Romances with spectacles, and be at Masks and Dancings, when she is fit only to act the Anties? These are contradictions to Nature: the tearing of her Marks, and where she has writ fifty or sixty, to lessen (beyond the proportion of the unjust Steward) and write sixteen. And those who thus manage their widowhood, have more reason to bewail it at last than at first, as having more experimentally found the mischief of being left to their own guidance. It will therefore concern them all to put themselves under a safe Conduct, by an assiduous Devotion to render themselves up to the leading of the one infallible Guide, who, if he be not a *covering of the eyes*, Gen. 20. 16. to perclude all second Choices, may yet be a *light to them* for discerning who are fit to be chosen; that if they see fit to use their liberty and Marry, they may yet take the Apostles restriction with it, 1 Cor. 7. 40. that *it be only in the Lord*. Upon such sober Motives, and with such due Circumstances as may approve it to him, and render it capable of his Benediction.

The Close.

1. **I** HAVE now gone through both Parts of the propos'd Method. The former has presented those Qualifications which are equally necessary to every Woman: These, as a Root, send sap and vigor to the distinct Branches, animate and impregnate the several successive States through which she is to pass. He that hath pure Ore or Bullion, may cast it into what Form best fits his use, may translate it from one to another; and she who has the Mine of Virtues, may furnish out any Condition; her being good in an absolute consideration, will certainly make her so in a relative. On the other side, she who has not such a Stock, cannot keep up the Honor of any State; like corrupted Liquor, empty it from one Vessel to another, it still infects and contaminates all. And this is the cause that Women are a like complain'd of under all Forms, because so many want this Fundamental Vertu: were there more good Women, there would be more modest Virgins, loyal and obedient Wives, and sober Widows.

2. I must therefore intreat those who will look on this Tract, not only to single out that part which bears their own Inscription, but that they think themselves no less concern'd in that which relates indefinitely to their Sex; endeavor to possess themselves of those excellencies which should be as universal as their kind: and when they are so stor'd with Matter, they may leave Providence to diversifie the Shape, and to assign them their Scene of Action.

3. And now would God it were as easie to persuade, as it is to propose; and that this Discourse may not be taken only as a Gazet for its newness, and discarded as soon as read, but that it may at least advance to the honor of an Almanac, be allowed one Year ere it be out of date: and in that time, if frequently and seriously consulted, it may perhaps awaken some Ladies from their stupid Dreams, convince them that they were sent into the World for nobler purposes, then only to make a little Glittering in it; like a Comet,

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to give a blaze, and then disappear. And truly, if it may Operate but so far as to give them an effective sense of that, I shall think it has done them a considerable Service: They may, I am sure from that Principle, deduce all necessary Consequences, and I wish they would but take the pains to draw the Corollaries; for those Inductions they make to themselves, would be much more efficacious than those which are drawn to their hands. Propriety is a great endearment, we love to be Profelytes to our selves; and People oft resist others Reasons, who would upon meer partiality pay reverence to their own.

4. But besides this, there would be another Advantage, if they could be but got to a custom of considering, by it they might insensibly undermine the grand Instrument of their ruine. That careless incogitancy, so remarkably frequent among all, and not least among Persons of Quality, is the source of innumerable Mischiefs is the *Dalilah*, that at once lulls and betrays them; It keeps them in a perpetual Sleep, binds up their Faculties; so that though they are not extinct, yet they become useless. *Plato* used to say, *That a man a sleep was good for nothing*: and 'tis certainly no less true of this Moral drowsiness than the Natural. And as in Sleep the fancy only is in motion, so these inconsiderate Persons do rather dream than discourse, entertain little trifling Images of things, which are presented by their Senses, but know not how to converse with their Reason. So that in this drowsy state, all temptations come on them with the same advantage, with that of a thief in the night; a Phrase by which the Scripture expresses the most inevitable unforeseen danger, *1 Thess.* 5. 2. We read in *Judges*, how easily *Laisb* became a pray to a handful of men, meerly because the of supine negligent humor of the Inhabitants, which had cut them off from all intercourse with any who might have succor'd them, *Jud.* 18. 27, 28. and certainly it gives no less opportunity to our Spiritual Assailants, leaves us naked and ungarded to receive all their Impressions. How prodigious a thing is it then, that this state of dulness and danger should be affectedly chosen, yet we see it too often is; even by those whose qualities and Education fit them for more Ingenious Elections; nay, which

which is yet more riddle, that very aptness disenable, sets them above what it prepares them for. Labor is lookt on as utterly incompatible with Greatness, and consideration is lookt on as a labor of the mind; and there are some Ladies who seem to reckon it as their Prerogative, to be exempted from both; will no more apply their Understandings to any serious Discussion, then their Hands to the Spindle and Distaff; the one they think pedantic, as the other is mean. In the mean time, by what strange measures do they proceed? they look on Idiots as the most deplorable of Creatures, because they want reason; and yet make of their own excellence and preeminence, to want the use of it; which is indeed so much worse then to want the thing, as sloth is worse then poverty, a moral defect then a natural. But we may see by this, how much civil and sacred Estimates differ: for we find the *Bereans* commended, not only as more diligent, but as more noble too, *Acts* 17. 11. because they attentively consider'd, and strictly examined the *Doctrine* preach'd to them. By which they may discern, that in Gods Court of Honor, a stupid Oscitancy is no ennobling Quality, how-ever it comes to be thought so in theirs.

5. And if this one point might be gain'd, if they would but so far actuate their Reason, as deliberately and duly to weigh their Interest, they would find that so strictly engaging them to all that is Vertuous, that they must have a very invincible resolution for ruine, if that cannot persuade them. And I hope all women are not *Medea's*, whom the Poet brings avowing the horridness of that fact, which yet readily resolved to execute. They are generally rather timorous, and apt to start the apprehension of danger; let them but see a serpent tho at a great distance, they will need no homilies or lectures to be persuaded to fly it. And sure did they but clearly discern what a sting there is in those vicious follies they embrace, their fear would make them quit their hold, put them in such a trembling, as would like that of *Belshazzars*, slacken their joints, and make those things drop from them, which before they most tenaciously grasped. For indeed in sin there is a conspiracy of all that can be dreadful to a rational being, so that

one may give its compendium by the very reverse of that which the Apostle gives of Godliness, 1 Tim. 4.8. for as the one has the promises, so the other has the curses of this life and of that to come.

6. In this life every depraved act (much more habit) has a black shadow attending it: it casts one inward upon the conscience in uncomfortable upbraidings and regrets. 'Tis true indeed some have the art to disguise that to themselves by casting a yet darker over it, suppressing all those re-actings by an industrious stupefaction, making their souls so perfect night, that they cannot see those black images their Consciences represent. But as this renders their condition but the more wretched, so neither can they blind others tho they do themselves. Vice casts a dark shadow outwards too, not such as may conceal but betray its self: and as the evening shadows increase in dimension, grow to a monstrosity and disproportion, so the longer any ill habit is continued, the more visible, the more deformed it appears, draws more observation and more censure.

7. 'Twere indeed endless to reckon up the temporal evils to which it exposes its votaries. Immodesty destroyes their fame, a vaine Prodigality their fortune, Anger makes them mad, Pride hateful, Levity renders them despis'd, Obstinacy desperate, and Irreligion is a complication of all these, fills up their measure both of guilt and wretchedness. So that had vertue no other advocate, her very Antagonist would plead for her: the miserable consequences of vice, would like the flames of *Sodom*, send all considering persons to that little *Zoar*; which how despicable soever it may have appeared before, cannot but look invitingly, when safety is inscrib'd on its gates.

8. But it must infinitely more do so if they please to open a vistor into the other World, make use of divine perspectives to discern those distant objects which their grosser senses do here intercept. There they may see the dismal Catastrophe of their Comedies, the miserable inversion of all unlawful or unbounded pleasures: there that Prophetic menace concerning *Babylon* which we find, *Revel. 18. 7.* will be literally verified upon every unhappy soul, *According as she exalted herself and lived delicatly, so much the more*

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tribulation give her; the torment of that life will bear proportion to the pride and luxuries of this. It will therefore be necessary for those who here wallow in pleasures, to confront to them the remembrance of those rivers of Brimstone, and ask themselves the Prophets question, *who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* We find *Esay*, when he denounces but temporal judgements against the daughters of *Zion*, exactly pursues the Antithesis, and to every part of their effeminate delicacy he opposes the direct contrary hardship, instead of *sweet smells*, there shall be a *stink*; instead of a *girdle*, a *rent*; instead of *well set hair*, *balddness*; instead of a *flourisher*, a *girding with sackcloth*; and *burning* instead of *beauty*. *Esay* 3. 24.

9. It were well the daughters of our *Zion* would copy out this lecture, and prudently fore-see how every particular sin or vanity of theirs will have its adapted punishment in another World. And sure this consideration well digested, must needs be a forcible expedient to cleanse them from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, as the Apostle speaks, *2 Cor.* 7. 1. For is it possible for her to cherish and blow up her libidinous flames here, who considers them but as the first kindlings of those inextinguishable ones hereafter? Can she make it her study to please her appetite, that remembers that *Dives's* unintermitted feast ends in an unallayed thirst? Or can she deny the crumbs of her table to that *Lazarus*, to whom she fore-sees she shall then supplicate for a drop of water? In fine can she lay out her whole industry, her fortune, nay her ingenuity too, in making provision for her flesh, who considers that that flesh will more corrupt by pampering, and breed the worm that never dies? Certainly no woman can be so desperately daring, as thus to attack damnation, resist her reason and her sense, only that she may ruine her soul; and unless she can do all this, her fore-sight will prove her escape, and her viewing the bottomless pit in *Lanskip* and *picture* will secure her from a real descent into it.

10. But now that this Tract may not make its exit in the shape of a Fury, bring the meditations to Hell and there leave them, it must now at last shift the Scene, and as it has shew'd the blackness of vice by that outer darkness to

which it leads, we also will let in a beam of the Celestial light to discover the beauty of Vertue; remind the Reader that there is a Region of Joy as well as a place of torment and Piety and Vertue is that milky way that leads to it; a state, compared to which the *Elysium* of the Heathen is as inconsiderable as it is fictitious, the Mahometan Paradise as flat and as insipid as it is gross and brutish; where the undertaking of the Psalmist shall be completely answered *those that fear the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good*, Psal. 34. 10. And this happy state is as accessible as excellent. God is not unsincere in his proposals, offers not these glories only to tantalize and abuse us, but to animate and encourage mankind. He sets up an inviting prize; and not only marks out, but levels the way to it; makes that our duty which is also our pleasure, yea and our honor too. So has he contrived for our ease, that knowing how hardly we can divest our voluptuousness and ambition, he puts us not to it: all he demands is but that he may chuse the object. And in that he is yet more obliging, for by that at once he refines and satisfies the desires. He takes us off indeed from the fulsome pleasures of sense, which by their grossness may cloy, yet by reason of their emtiness can never fill us; and brings us to tast the more pure spiritual delights which are the true elixir of Pleasures, in comparison whereof all the sensual are but as the dregs or feces in an extraction, after the spirits are drawn off. In like manner he calls us from an aspiring to those pinnacles of honor, where we alwayes sit tottering and often fall down, but yet invites us to soar higher, where we shall have the *Moon* with all her vicissitudes, and changes under our feet, Rev. 12. 1. and enjoy a grandeur as irreverfible as splendid.

¶ 11. Thus does her shew us a way to hallow our most undsanctified affections; thus, according to the Prophecie of *Zechariah*, may boldness be writ even upon the bells of the horses, *Zec. 14. 20.* upon our most brutal inclinations; and thus may all those feminine Passions, which now seduce Women from Vertue, advance them in it. Let her that is amorous, place her love upon him who is (as the Sponse tells us, *Cant. 5. 10.*) *the chiefest among ten thousand*; the that is angry, turn her edge against her sins; the that is haughty, disdain

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the Devils drudgery; the that is fearful, dread him who can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell, Matt. 5. 28. and she that is sad, reserve her tears for her penitential offices. Thus may they consecrate even their infirmities; and tho they cannot Devise, or erect Temples to them; as the Romans did to their Passions, nay their Diseases; yet after they are thus cleansed, they may sacrifice them as the Jews did the clean Beasts in the Tabernacle. Only irreligion and Profaneness is exempt from this Priviledg, no water of Purification can cleanse it, or make it serviceable in the Temple; that like the spoils of Jericho, is so execrable, that it must be devoted to destruction, as an accursed thing, Jos. 6. 17. For tho God does not despise the work of his own hands, hath so much kindness to his Creatures, that he endeavors to reduce all our native inclinations to their primitive rectitude; and therefore does not abolish, but purifie them; yet Atheism is none of those; tis a counterblast from Hell, in opposition to that mighty wind in which the Holy Spirit descended. Tho the subject in which it subsists may be reformed, the person may turn Christian, and the wit that maintained its blasphemous paradoxes may be converted to holier uses: yet the quality it self is capable of no such happy Metamorphosis, that must be extirpated, for it cannot be made tributary. Which shews how transcendent an ill that is which cannot be converted to good. Even that Omnipotence which can out of the very stones raise children to Abraham, attempts not any transmutation of this; which ought therefore to possess all hearts with a detestation of it, and advance them in an earnest pursuit of all the parts of Piety.

12. And that is it which I would now once more (as a farewell exhortation) commend to my Female Readers, as that which virtually contains all other Accomplishments. 'Tis that pearl in the Gospel for which they may part with all and make a good bargain too. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, says the wisest of men, Prov. 1. 7. and by his experience he shews that it is the completing end of it too; for he no sooner declined from that but he grew to dotage and dishonor. Let all those therefore to whom God has dispens'd an outward affluence, given them a visible splen-

splendor in the eyes of the world, be careful to secure to themselves *that honor which comes from God only*, Joh. 5. 44. unite their souls to that Supreme Majesty who is the fountain of true honor: who in his bestowing the Crown of righteousness proceeds by the same measures by which he disposes the Crown of *Israel*, when he avowed to *Samuel* that he *lookt not on the outward appearance but beheld the heart*, Sam. 16. 7. If God see not his own Image there, all the beauty and gayety of the outward form is despicable in his eyes, like the apples of *Sodom* only a kind of painted dust. But if Piety be firmly rooted there, they then become like the Kings daughter, all *glorious within too*; a much more valuable bravery than the garment of needle-work and vesture of Gold, *Psal. 45. 14*. And this is it that must enter them into the Kings Palace, into that *new Jerusalem*, where they shall not wear, but inhabit *Pearls and Gems*, Rev. 21. 19. be beautiful without the help of art or nature, by the mere reflexion of the Divine brightness; be all that their then enlarged comprehensions can wish, and infinitely more than they can here imagine.

FINIS.

THE CONTENTS.

PART I.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Sect. 1. Of Modesty.</i> | <i>p. 1.</i> |
| <i>Sect. 2. Of Meekness.</i> | <i>p. 20.</i> |
| <i>Sect. 3. Of Compassion.</i> | <i>p. 32.</i> |
| <i>Sect. 4. Of Affability.</i> | <i>p. 43.</i> |
| <i>Sect. 5. Of Piety.</i> | <i>p. 52.</i> |

PART II.

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Sect. 1. Of Virgins.</i> | <i>p. 95.</i> |
| <i>Sect. 2. Of Wives.</i> | <i>p. 110.</i> |
| <i>Sect. 3. Of Widows.</i> | <i>p. 140.</i> |
| <i>The Glose.</i> | <i>p. 157.</i> |

THE CONTENTS

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